

Authorities find longest Southwest border smuggling tunnel

By ELLIOT SPAGAT
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — U.S. authorities on Wednesday announced the discovery of the longest smuggling tunnel ever found on the Southwest border, stretching more than three-quarters of a mile from an industrial site in Tijuana, Mexico, to the San Diego area. U.S. Customs and Border Protection said it featured an extensive rail/cart system, forced air ventilation, high voltage electrical cables and panels, an elevator at the tunnel entrance, and a complex drainage system. "This one blows past (the second-longest)," said Lance LeNoir, a Border Patrol operations supervisor. "We never really thought they had the moxie to go that far. They continue to surprise me."

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A covered access point leading to a smuggling tunnel is seen on the U.S. side of the border wall in San Diego, Calif. on Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2020.

Associated Press



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This undated photo provided by the Drug Enforcement Administration shows what is believed to be the longest smuggling tunnel between Mexico and the U.S. Authorities have announced the discovery of the longest smuggling tunnel ever found on the Southwest border.

Associated Press

Authorities find longest Southwest border smuggling tunnel

Continued from Front

The tunnel raised questions about the effectiveness of President Donald Trump's border wall, which stretches several feet underground in the area. The tunnel was found about 70 feet underground, well below the wall.

Following the discovery in August, Mexican law enforcement identified the entrance and members of the San Diego Tunnel Task Force began mapping the tunnel that extends a total of 4,309 feet. (1,313 meters). The next longest tunnel in the U.S. was discovered in San Diego in 2014. It

was 2,966 feet (904 meters) long.

The newly discovered tunnel is about 5.5 feet (1.68 meters) tall and 2 feet (0.61 meters) wide and runs at an average depth of 70 feet (21.3 meters) below the surface, officials said.

Agents discovered several hundred sandbags blocking a suspected former exit of the tunnel in the Otay Mesa warehouse district within the U.S.

While there were no arrests, drug seizures or confirmed exit point in the United States, the length — more than 14 football fields — stunned authorities. It went under several warehouses in the Otay Mesa area, where sophisticated tunnels have typically ended, and extended into open fields.

U.S. authorities say they are confident that the tunnel exited in San Diego at one time, based on its trajectory.

LeNoir, a veteran on a multi-agency task force of tunnel investigators known as "tunnel rats," said he made his way through about 50 feet of sugar sacks blocking the tunnel but couldn't go any farther.

An incomplete offshoot of the tunnel that extended more than 3,500 feet suggested to authorities that smugglers had plugged an initial exit point and were building another.

The suspected previous exit "became unsustainable for whatever reason, so they built a spur," Border Patrol spokesman Jeff Stephenson said.

By federal law, U.S. authorities must fill the U.S. side of tunnels with concrete after they are discovered.

"The sophistication and length of this particular tunnel demonstrates the time-consuming efforts transnational criminal organizations will undertake to facilitate cross-border smuggling," said Cardell T. Morant, acting special agent in charge of Homeland Security Investigations in San Diego.

Authorities have found 15 sophisticated tunnels on California's border with Mexico since 2006, with hallmarks including lighting, ventilation, railway tracks and hydraulic lifts.

The tunnels are concentrated in an area where clay-like soil is conducive to digging and industrial warehouses provide cover. The latest tunnel was discovered by Mexican authorities in a Tijuana parking lot for cargo trucks, next to the city's airport.

U.S. authorities mapped its course, drilled a hole on the U.S. side and lowered a camera to determine where to start making their way through.

"It was endless," LeNoir said.

Authorities didn't say who they believe was behind the tunnel but the area has been a stronghold of Mexico's Sinaloa cartel. The cartel's longtime leader, Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, was sentenced to life in U.S. prison in July. □

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Justice Dept. won't oppose probation for ex-Trump aide Flynn

By ERIC TUCKER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department said Wednesday that it would not oppose probation for former Trump administration national security adviser Michael Flynn — a more lenient stance than prosecutors took earlier this month, when they said he deserved prison time. The latest sentencing filing still seeks a sentence of up to six months, but unlike before, prosecutors explicitly state that probation would be a "reasonable" punishment and that they would

not oppose it. It was not clear why the Justice Department appeared to soften its position, though prosecutors did suggest Flynn deserves credit for his decades-long military service. "There is no dispute that the defendant has an unusually strong record of public service," prosecutors wrote. As part of special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation, Flynn pleaded guilty in December 2017 to lying to the FBI about his conversations with the then-Russian ambassador to the United States during the presidential transition

period. He cooperated extensively, leading prosecutors to initially support a sentence of probation. He was to have been sentenced the following year, but after he was sharply rebuked by the judge during the sentencing hearing, he abruptly asked that it be postponed so that he could continue cooperating with the government in hopes of getting additional credit for his behavior and avoiding any prison time. Since then, though, he has fired his lawyers and replaced them with new ones who have taken a sharply





In this Feb. 1, 2017 file photo, National Security Adviser Michael Flynn speaks during the daily news briefing at the White House, in Washington.

Associated Press

adversarial approach toward the prosecution. They have raised allega-

tions of government misconduct that a judge has rejected. □

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In this January 11, 2020 photo Beto O'Rourke, a former presidential candidate, senate candidate and congressman gives a pep talk to campaign volunteers canvassing for Eliz Markowitz in Katy, Texas.

Associated Press

Democrats' early 2020 blitz to strike in Texas flops

By **PAUL J. WEBER**
Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — If Texas is going to be competitive in 2020, the first race wasn't.

Democrats went all-in on a legislative runoff in the booming Houston suburbs, drumming up endorsements from Joe Biden and Elizabeth Warren and

putting \$1 million on the ground. Still, a Republican real estate developer who had lost seven previous tries for office cruised to a double-digit victory.

It was a high-profile defeat for Democrats who supercharged a sleepy state-house special election in a bid to make an early 2020 strike on the GOP's biggest turf. On Wednesday, Republicans called it a lesson. "They made a big mistake by nationalizing," said Republican strategist Karl Rove, the former adviser to President George W. Bush. In final unofficial results, Republican Gary Gates polled 58% of the vote to 42% for Democrat Eliz Markowitz.

But despite the unusual attention on the race, the outcome is no surefire predictor of what's in store for Texas. Turnout for the race was more than 30,000 — far better than typical state-house runoffs in Texas but still a fraction of how many are expected to vote in fast-growing Fort Bend

County come November. And Democrats, who need to flip nine legislative seats to claim a majority in the Texas House for the first time since 2001, have more favorable targets than state House District 28.

But before Tuesday's blow-out, Democrats said there was reason to believe. President Donald Trump carried the district by 10 points in 2016, but two years later, Beto O'Rourke got within 3 points in his failed U.S. Senate run. In the final stretch, the race drew support from Biden, who said it could "set the tone for the entire general election in 2020."

"That really isn't going to change," said Ross Morales Rocketto, co-founder of Run for Something, which recruits Democratic candidates nationwide. "But I think one thing a lot of Democratic and progressive donors need to really think hard about is what is going to be required to invest in the state of Texas, in order for us to get the outcomes that we want?"

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Arrests at LA church allege marriage, immigration fraud

By **BRIAN MELLEY**

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Federal agents raided a Philippines-based church in Los Angeles Wednesday in a human trafficking investigation that led to arrests of three church leaders in what prosecutors said was a decades-long scheme to trick followers into becoming fundraisers and arrange sham marriages to keep them in the U.S.

The local leader of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ church was arrested on immigration fraud charges in the early morning bust along with a worker who confiscated passports of the victims of the scheme and another who handled finances, the U.S. attorney's office said.

Workers who managed to escape from the church told the FBI that they had been sent across the U.S. to work long hours soliciting donations year-round for the church's charity and were beaten and psychologically abused if they didn't make daily quotas, according to an affidavit filed in support of the charges. Some described having to live in cars at truck stops.

The immigrants essentially became full-time workers, sometimes referred to as "miracle workers," in a crusade to raise money for the nonprofit Children's Joy Foundation USA, which was supposed to benefit poor children in their homeland. But the complaint said most of the money raised was used to finance church operations and the lavish lifestyle of church leader Apollo Quiboloy.

The church claims a membership of 6 million people and backed the 2016 can-

middle of last year, \$20 million was sent back to the church in the Philippines,

41, who allegedly handled fraudulent immigration documents, prosecutors

mented 82 sham marriages over a 20-year period between top fundraisers and church members who were U.S. citizens.

In addition to raiding the church's Van Nuys compound, agents were conducting searches at other Los Angeles-area locations and at two places in Hawaii linked to the church.

Two years ago, a leader of a Hawaii branch of the church was arrested smuggling cash onto a private plane in Honolulu bound for the Philippines with Quiboloy on board, according to court records.

Investigators said Felina Salinas declared she was carrying \$40,000. But investigators said they discovered \$335,000 and \$9,000 in Australian currency stuffed in socks in her carry-on suitcase, according to documents filed in U.S. District Court in Honolulu. U.S. law requires that travelers declare currency in excess of \$10,000.

Prosecutors said a witness saw Salinas and Quiboloy order church members to smuggle hundreds of thousands of dollars in black socks packed in suitcases from California to the Philippines in 2013 and 2014.

A defense lawyer questioned the credibility of the witness in the Hawaii case. "I have a woman who says she saw \$100,000 go from California to the Philippines, then she said it was two or three million," attorney Michael Green said, according to Hawaii News Now. "She says it was put in socks. They must have parishioners with size 18 feet because the socks must have been really big." □



A smashed in door is seen at the entrance of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ Church in the Van Nuys section of Los Angeles on Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2020.

Associated Press

didacy of President Rodrigo Duterte, a close friend of Quiboloy. Duterte has used the group's radio and TV program in southern Davao city to express his views on issues way back when he was mayor of the southern port city.

Quiboloy claims to be "the appointed son of God" and in October last year claimed he stopped a major earthquake from hitting the southern Philippines.

Between 2014 and the

the FBI said. "Most of these funds appear to derive from street-level solicitation," according to the affidavit by FBI Special Agent Anne Wetzel. "Little to no money solicited appears to benefit impoverished or in-need children."

Calls to the church for comment were not immediately answered.

Guia Cabactulan, 59, the top church official in the U.S., was arrested in Van Nuys with Marissa Duenas,

said. Amanda Estopare, 48, who allegedly enforced fundraising quotas, was arrested in Virginia.

Cabactulan and Duenas are expected to make initial court appearances Thursday in U.S. District Court in Santa Ana, said Thom Mrozek, a spokesman for the U.S. attorney in Los Angeles. Estopare was ordered held after a hearing in Norfolk, Virginia, and expected back in court Monday. Investigators docu-

Alabama to shutter aging, dilapidated prison

By KIM CHANDLER

Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) —

A state prison in Alabama will be largely shut down because of infrastructure problems, the state corrections commissioner announced Wednesday in the latest upheaval of a troubled system that has struggled with crowding, low staffing and violence. The main building of Holman Correctional Facility, a close-security prison in Atmore, will be closed and 617 inmates will be sent to other state prisons, Alabama Corrections Commissioner Jeff Dunn said. The decision was made because maintenance crews were struggling daily to maintain sewer and electrical systems housed in a tunnel running beneath the main prison building at the 51-year-old prison, Dunn said.

Some inmates, including death row inmates, will remain at Holman in units that run on separate systems, he said.

"This is a real and serious issue that cannot be understated and, after learning the extent of the risks associated with continued



In this March 12, 2016 file photo, the sign to The William C. Holman Correctional Facility in Atmore, Ala., is displayed.

maintenance attempts at Holman Correctional Facility, moving quickly on our plans to decommission was the right and only decision," Dunn said.

There has been a national spotlight on troubled prison systems in Alabama and Mississippi because of deadly violence and unsanitary conditions. Mississippi's governor this week

announced the state will take steps to close part of a state prison that has been rocked by deadly violence and beset by longstanding problems such as broken toilets and moldy showers. The Department of Justice last year issued a report condemning Alabama prisons for excessive levels of violence and inmate deaths and a critical staff-

ing shortage. The Justice Department threatened to file a lawsuit against the state unless the problems were addressed.

Groups representing inmates said the closure will add inmates to prisons already struggling with crowding, violence and staffing. "To be clear, this choice will exacerbate already unacceptable levels of overcrowding and understaffing in ADOC — a system with 40 percent of required staff and 169 percent overcrowding. It will almost certainly lead to more violence and death," Alabamians for Fair Justice, a collection of organizations and individuals, wrote in a letter to Dunn and state lawmakers. CJ Sandley, a senior staff attorney with the Southern Poverty Law Center, said in a statement that "rather than pursuing band-aid solutions, Alabama's Department of Corrections and Governor Ivey must focus their efforts on addressing overcrowding and understaffing."

Dunn told reporters that the transfer will place additional stress on the rest of the system, but added that they are working to mitigate that impact.

U.S. Attorney Jay Town, who has been leading the negotiations between the

state and the Justice Department, said he was "disappointed that we were not privy to the decision to close Holman at the time such a decision was being considered." Town added that, "we will continue to forge ahead in our good faith negotiations."

Alabama will continue to house death row inmates at Holman but the inmates will be moved to a restrictive housing unit that has separate infrastructure systems. The state on Tuesday night moved 21 death row inmates from Donaldson Correctional Facility to Holman. The execution chamber at Holman will still be used for carrying out executions and the state is consulting on how to maintain the chamber, Dunn said. The state will also maintain a free-standing dorm that will house 150 low-risk inmates serving life without parole sentences. Those inmates will work in the prison industry shops that make license plates and clothing.

The state did not give a time frame for the transfer of inmates, citing security reasons. The decision to shutter Holman was purely for infrastructure problems, and not because of the violence that has plagued it and other prisons, Dunn said.

The Southern Poverty Law Center said there have been at least four deaths at Holman since early December. The department announced in December that it was investigating the death of Willie Leon Scott, 48. The department didn't give specifics, but said his injuries were the result of a Dec. 4 incident at Holman. Moses Robinson, 38, died Dec. 31 from injuries sustained in an attack at Holman, according to the department.

In 2016, the Holman warden and a correctional officer were stabbed during a riot at the prison. Inmates started a fire and posted pictures of the uprising on social media. A corrections officer at the prison was killed in 2016 after being stabbed by a prisoner. □

Georgia State Patrol fires 30-plus new troopers for cheating

ATLANTA (AP) — An entire graduating class of the Georgia State Patrol's Trooper School has been fired or resigned amid a cheating scandal, the state's public safety chief said Wednesday.

At a news conference, Georgia Department of Public Safety Commissioner Col. Mark W. McDonough confirmed to news outlets that 32 troopers were fired after being accused of cheating on an online exam for the speed detection operator component of the school's curriculum. One trooper resigned after the cheating allegations came to light. All 33 are August graduates of the 106th Trooper School.

McDonough said the investigation began in Oc-

tober after officials learned about the allegations from the girlfriend of one of the cadets, who said she took the online test for him.

When confronted about that, the trooper told superiors "He was not the only one who cheated, the whole class cheated," and that's when the decision was made to investigate the entire class.

McDonough said State Patrol's investigation confirmed four allegations: every trooper cheated on speed detection operator exam; a cadet helped another cadet with their exam; three cadets assisted another with their exam; and a training instructor printed a makeup exam and permitted two cadets who failed to take it back

to their rooms for studying purposes.

McDonough said all the graduates signed an oath to uphold professional conduct and standards, which they violated, leading to Wednesday's dismissals. He added that the troopers used typed notes, received direct assistance and utilized test questions and answers on GroupMe and on a website that aggregates tests. He also said they used two Snapchat groups to facilitate the cheating and get their stories straight as the investigation was ongoing.

McDonough said he's ordered a complete audit of the training department, which could lead to people higher up being disciplined. □

Lawmaker promotes measure to restore felon voting rights

By **BRUCE SCHREINER**

Associated Press

FRANKFORT, Ky. (AP) —

A House Democrat on Wednesday urged lawmakers to put a constitutional measure on Kentucky's ballot to automatically restore voting rights for felons who have completed their sentences.

The proposed constitutional amendment would be a permanent and broader follow-up to a voting rights executive order signed last month by Gov. Andy Beshear. That order restored voting rights for more than 140,000 nonviolent offenders who have completed their sentences and fulfilled one of the new governor's campaign pledges.

Rep. Charles Booker praised the Democratic governor's action but said "there is still work to do" as he pushed for action on his proposed ballot measure. "By executive order, it can come," he said. "And that means by executive order, it can go away."

The bill was introduced in early January but remains in committee. If the measure clears the GOP-led legislature, Kentucky voters will decide whether to add it to the state Constitution. In 2015, former Democratic Gov. Steve Beshear — the current governor's father — signed an executive order that would have automatically restored voting rights to some convicted felons once they completed their sentences. Republican Gov. Matt Bevin rescinded

that order once he took office.

The Kentucky Constitution bans convicted felons from voting. The governor can restore voting rights to convicted felons with a pardon.

Bevin issued hundreds of pardons between his November electoral defeat and his final day in office. Several pardons stirred outrage from victims or their families, prosecutors and lawmakers. Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron, a Republican, has asked the FBI to investigate.

The ballot measure's supporters said Wednesday that about 312,000 Kentuckians of voting age were not allowed to vote last year because of the state's "harsh voter disenfranchisement laws."

"Once you have completed your sentence, you should be able to get back on your feet," Booker said. "You should be able to have your voice heard again."

The Louisville lawmaker's measure would automatically restore felon voting rights after completion of a prison sentence, probation or parole. More than a dozen House members, all Democrats, have signed on as co-sponsors.

Booker is among several Democrats seeking their party's nomination this year for the U.S. Senate seat held by Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. □



Kentucky state Rep. Charles Booker, right, promotes a voting-rights measure on Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2020, in Frankfort, Ky.

Associated Press

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Leaked report shows United Nations suffered hack

By **JAMEY KEATEN and FRANK BAJAK**
Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — Sophisticated hackers infiltrated U.N. offices in Geneva and Vienna last year in an apparent espionage operation, and their identity and the extent of the data they obtained is unknown.

An internal confidential document from the United Nations, leaked to The New Humanitarian and seen by The Associated Press, says dozens of servers were compromised including at the U.N. human rights office, which collects sensitive data and has often been a lightning rod of criticism from autocratic governments for exposing rights abuses.

Asked about the report, one U.N. official told the AP that the hack appeared "sophisticated" and that the extent of the damage remained unclear, especially in terms of personal, secret or compromising information that may have been stolen. The official, who spoke only on condition of anonymity to speak freely about the episode, said systems have since been reinforced.

The skill level was so high it is possible a state-backed actor might have been behind it, the official said.

"It's as if someone were walking in the sand, and swept up their tracks with a broom afterward," the official said. "There's not even a trace of a clean-up."

The leaked Sept. 20 report says logs that would have betrayed the hackers' activities inside the U.N. networks — what was accessed and what may have been siphoned out — were "cleared." It also shows that among accounts known to have been accessed were those of domain administrators — who by default have master access to all user accounts in their purview.

"Sadly ... still counting our casualties," the report says. Jake Williams, CEO of the cybersecurity firm Rendition Infosec and a former U.S. government hacker, said the fact that the hackers

cleared the network logs indicates they were not top flight. The most skilled hackers — including U.S., Russian and Chinese agents — can cover their tracks by edit-

ing confidential was compromised."

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the attack "resulted in a compromise of core infrastructure com-

to Human Rights agency, which is located across town from the main U.N. office in Geneva, and two were used by the U.N. Economic Commission for Eu-

weekends in recent months to isolate the local U.N. data center from the internet, re-write passwords and ensure the systems were clean. Twenty machines had to be rebuilt, the report says.

The hack comes amid rising concerns about computer or mobile phone vulnerabilities, both for large organizations like governments and the U.N. as well as for individuals and businesses. Last week, U.N. human rights experts asked the U.S. government to investigate a suspected Saudi hack that may have siphoned data from the personal smartphone of Jeff Bezos, the Amazon founder and owner of The Washington Post, in 2018. On Tuesday, The New York Times's bureau chief in Beirut, Ben Hubbard, said technology researchers suspected an attempted intrusion into his phone around the same time.

The United Nations, and its human rights office, is particularly sensitive, and could be a tempting target. The U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, and her predecessors have called out, denounced and criticized alleged war crimes, crimes against humanity and less severe rights violations and abuses in places as diverse as Syria and Saudi Arabia.

Dozens of independent human rights experts who work with the U.N. human rights office have greater leeway — and fewer political and financial ties to the governments that fund the United Nations and make up its membership — to denounce alleged rights abuses. "There's a lot of our data that could have been hacked, and we don't know what that data could be," said Richards, whose group advocates for the welfare of employees of the world body.

Potentially affected, for example, are staff in the office of the special envoy for Syria carrying out sensitive investigations and human rights staffers interviewing witnesses. □



In this June 18, 2014, file photo flags fly outside the United Nations building in Vienna, Austria.

Associated Press

ing those logs instead of clearing them.

"The intrusion definitely looks like espionage," said Williams, noting that the active directory component — where all users' permissions are managed — from three different domains were compromised: those of United Nations offices in Geneva and Vienna and of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

"This, coupled with the relatively small number of infected machines, is highly suggestive of espionage," he said after viewing the report. "The attackers have a goal in mind and are deploying malware to machines that they believe serve some purpose for them."

Any number of intelligence agencies from around the globe are likely interested in infiltrating the U.N., Williams said.

The hack was not severe at the U.N. human rights office, said its spokesman, Rupert Colville.

"We face daily attempts to get into our computer systems," Colville said. "This time, they managed, but it did not get very far. Noth-

ing those logs instead of clearing them. The earliest detected activity related to the intrusion occurred in July and it was detected in August, he said in response to emailed questions.

He said the world body does not have enough information to determine who might have been behind the incursion, but added "the methods and tools used in the attack indicate a high level of resource, capability and determination."

"The damage related to this specific attack has been contained, and additional mitigation measures implemented," Dujarric wrote. "Nevertheless the threat of future attacks continues, and the United Nations Secretariat detects and responds to multiple attacks of various level of sophistication on a daily basis."

The internal document from the U.N. Office of Information and Technology said 42 servers were "compromised" and another 25 were deemed "suspicious," nearly all at the sprawling Geneva and Vienna offices. Three of the "compromised" servers belonged

rope.

The report says a flaw in Microsoft's SharePoint software was exploited by the hackers to infiltrate the networks but that the type of malware used was not known, nor had technicians identified the command and control servers on the internet used to exfiltrate information. Nor was it known what mechanism was used by the hackers to maintain their presence on the infiltrated networks.

Security researcher Matt Suiche, a French entrepreneur based in Dubai who founded the cybersecurity firm Comae Technologies, reviewed the report and said it appeared entry was gained through an anti-corruption tracker at the U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime.

The report mentions a range of IP addresses in Romania that may have been used to stage the infiltration, and Williams said one is reported to have some neighbors with a history of hosting malware.

Technicians at the United Nations office in Geneva, the world body's European hub, on at least two occasions worked through



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Angry Palestinians face dilemma in responding to Trump plan

By M. DARAGHMEH
J. KRAUSS

Associated Press

AL-KASSARAT, West Bank (AP) — The Palestinians have furiously rejected President Donald Trump's Mideast plan that would grant them limited autonomy in parts of the West Bank, while allowing Israel to annex all its settlements there and keep nearly all of east Jerusalem.

But they have few realistic options to prevent its implementation as Israel plows ahead with plans to unilaterally annex territory.

The Western-backed Palestinian leadership will come under mounting pressure from ordinary Palestinians and its rivals in the Islamic militant group Hamas to cut off security ties with Israel and the United States or even dismantle the increasingly unpopular Palestinian Authority.

But such drastic moves would risk further undermining the international consensus around solving the conflict, which largely supports the Palestinians' goal of an independent state in the West Bank, Gaza and east Jerusalem, territories Israel captured in the 1967 Mideast war.

President Mahmoud Abbas appears determined to shore up international support. He is traveling to Cairo this week for meetings at the Arab League, and the Palestinians' U.N. ambassador, Riyad Mansour, said Abbas plans to head to an African Union gathering and the U.N. Security Council within the next two weeks. Mansour said the Palestinians are consulting with council members about an as-yet-unwritten resolution — a text critical of the Trump plan would likely face a U.S. veto.

Small protests have been



Palestinian gunmen and civilians burn the U.S. and the Israeli flags, during a protest against the White House plan for ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, at Ein el-Hilweh refugee camp, in the southern port city of Sidon, Lebanon, Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2020.

held in the West Bank and Gaza, but most Palestinians appear to have largely shrugged off the plan. Few Palestinians place any stock in American peace plans after decades of failed initiatives, and little is expected to change on the ground as Israel extends sovereignty over settlements it has long treated as an integral part of its territory.

"Nothing will change," said Mahmoud Abu Anwar, a vegetable vendor in the West Bank city of Ramallah. The Israelis "are building on our land and they will keep building, with or without an American plan. ... But we will remain here, no matter what they do to us."

Over the long term, however, if Israel implements the plan, it appears far more likely to entrench a one-state reality — something both Israeli and Palestinian leaders have long rejected — than to lead to a negotiated solution.

"I prefer a Palestinian state,

but if they want to annex our land, we don't mind being citizens in Israel," said Naseem al-Jahaleen, who lives in a small Palestinian farming community in the Jordan Valley, which Israel would be allowed to annex under the plan.

He said it might even improve things, if Israel grants residents citizenship and allows them to build freely. Palestinian residents of the area currently live under Israeli military rule, which imposes restrictions on construction and movement that do not apply to residents of nearby Jewish settlements.

The long-awaited Trump plan, which was unveiled Tuesday, would allow Israel to annex all its West Bank settlements — which the Palestinians and most of the international community view as illegal — as well as the Jordan Valley, which accounts for roughly a fourth of the West Bank.

In return, the Palestinians would be granted state-

hood in Gaza, scattered chunks of the West Bank and some neighborhoods on the outskirts of Jerusalem, all linked together by a new network of roads, bridges and tunnels. Israel would control the state's borders and airspace and maintain overall security authority, something critics say would rob statehood of any meaning.

The plan would abolish the right of return for Palestinian refugees displaced by the 1948 war and their descendants, a key Palestinian demand. The entire agreement would be contingent on Gaza's Hamas rulers and other armed groups disarming, something they have always adamantly rejected.

Abbas responded to the deal with "1,000 no's."

He has always rejected violence, and few expect a new uprising in response to the plan. But Palestinian officials have hinted they may respond by suspending security coordination

with Israel or dismantling the Palestinian Authority altogether. That would leave Israel responsible for the complicated and expensive task of providing basic services to hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in the West Bank.

The Palestinians have made such threats in the past, with few people taking them seriously. But this time might be different, especially if Israel proceeds with annexation.

"Not taking action is not really an option for them anymore," said Ibrahim Dalalsha, a Palestinian analyst. "The tables were turned by the announcement of the U.S. peace plan."

He expects the Palestinian Authority to respond to any annexation move by severing security contacts with Israel and the U.S. — the last channel remaining after the Palestinians cut off all contacts with the Trump administration over its recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

Dalalsha says Palestinian security forces would still provide law and order and prevent attacks from areas under their control, but would no longer work alongside Israel.

Going forward, the perception of the international community will be key.

Saudi Arabia and Egypt, Arab states that are close U.S. allies, said they appreciated Trump's efforts and called for renewed negotiations without commenting on the plan's content. Ambassadors from the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Oman attended the unveiling, in a tacit sign of support. The European Union said it was studying the proposal, while Germany said the plan "raises questions" that it will discuss with European partners. □

Allies worry as US ponders cutting military forces in Africa



In this file photo taken Monday, Jan. 18, 2016, a soldier stands guard outside the Splendid Hotel in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in the wake of a weekend attack that killed up to 32 people.

By CARLEY PETESCH Associated Press

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — As extremist violence grows across Africa, the United States is considering reducing its military presence on the continent, a move that worries its international partners who are working to strengthen the fight in the tumultuous Sahel region.

The timing is especially critical in the Sahel, the vast arid region south of the Sahara Desert, where militants with links to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group have carried out increased attacks in the past six months. In Niger and Mali, soldiers have been ambushed and at times overpowered by hundreds of extremist gunmen on motorcycles. More than 500,000 people have been displaced by violence in Burkina Faso.

The pending decision is part of a worldwide review by Defense Secretary Mark Esper, who is looking for ways to tighten the focus on China and Russia.

"My aim is to free up time, money and manpower around the globe, where we currently are, so that I

can direct it" toward Asia or return forces to the United States to improve combat readiness, Esper said Monday after meeting with French Defense Minister Florence Parly, who traveled to Washington to urge the U.S. not to reduce forces in the Sahel.

High-profile Republicans and Democrats have warned that such a decision would undermine national security. They argue that cuts in Africa could hand over influence on the booming continent of 1.2 billion people to China and Russia.

The commander of U.S. forces in Africa, Gen. Stephen Townsend, is scheduled to testify Thursday to the Senate Armed Services Committee about the role of American forces in Africa.

Talk of a possible troop reduction "is reinforcing a view in West Africa that the U.S. is not interested, that it does not see it as a strategic importance and that it is going to cut and run and abandon its African allies," Judd Devermont, director of the Center for Strategic and International Studies

Africa Program, told The Associated Press.

The U.S. has about 6,000 personnel on the continent. In West Africa, the Africa Command's mandate is to advise and assist, whereas in East Africa, where most of the U.S. troops are located, forces also accompany African troops on missions. More than 1,000 U.S. personnel are currently in the Sahel. The U.S. has also constructed a \$110 million drone base in northern Niger.

Nigeria's information minister, Lai Mohammed, urged the U.S. not to cut back, citing an increase in terrorism in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Cameroon and Chad since the defeat of ISIS in Syria.

"So I think what we need now is more support," Mohammed told the AP. "I'm not talking in terms of physical soldiers, American soldiers. But I think we need more support. Otherwise we will inadvertently be strengthening the hand of the terrorists."

The looming U.S. decision comes as former colonizer France pledges more support than ever before to Sahel countries. France

already has sent more than 200 additional troops to reinforce its already 4,500-strong operation in the Sahel, and French Chief of Staff François Lecointre says he will request even more troops.

The mission in the Sahel "is a classic case of burden sharing, where limited U.S. support leverages an immense effort carried out by France and Europe," Parly said, speaking alongside Esper on Monday at a Pentagon news conference.

Parly joined top Portuguese, Swedish and Estonian military officials on a visit to Niger, Chad and Mali last week to discuss how to proceed with an international anti-terrorism coalition dubbed Takouba. At a summit with West African leaders this month, French President Emmanuel Macron said he hopes to convince U.S. President Donald Trump that the fight against global extremism "is also at stake in this region." West African leaders at the summit said they hoped the U.S. would maintain its military presence in West Africa.

The heads of state for the

G5 Sahel, a group that includes Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Chad, asked for a continuation of American and French military engagement in the region and "pleaded for a strengthening of the international presence alongside them," according to the closing statement for the summit.

The U.S. footprint in West Africa, where the cuts would most likely happen, is light compared to other regions. But the effect of its force presence, training programs, development aid and military assistance is important, leaders say.

Col. Thomas Geiser, deputy commander of special operations for the Africa Command, said the biggest risk is allowing al-Qaida affiliates and the Islamic State to expand "and potentially consolidate safe havens there."

He emphasized the need for a strengthened regional and multi-national approach to the violence and for more broad support of communities, saying African partners must lead efforts. But a regional security force assembled by the G5 Sahel has struggled to fund its efforts and end the violence.

The G5 Sahel force will now focus most of its efforts in the tri-border region between Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso, targeting Islamic State Grand Sahara, Parly said.

However, progress in the Sahel has been minimal, and the problems there need to be solved by those regional governments, the assistant secretary for the U.S. State Department's African affairs division, Tibor Nagy, said Monday during a telephone press briefing. "The U.S. is actively involved through a number of programs in the Sahel region," Nagy said. "It takes political will to counter terrorism."

It is unclear also how the newly constructed drone air base in northern Niger will be affected. Last week, the U.S. handed over a C-130 hangar at Niger Air Base 201 to the Nigerien Air Force. □

Health experts: Human-to-human spread of new virus worrying

By KEN MORITSUGU

Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — World health officials expressed "great concern" Wednesday that a dangerous new virus is starting to spread between people outside of China, a troubling development as China and the world frantically work to contain the outbreak. For a second day, the number of infections grew dramatically.

The new virus has now infected more people in China than were sickened there during the 2002-2003 SARS outbreak. On Wednesday, the number of cases jumped to 5,974, surpassing the 5,327 people diagnosed with SARS.

The death toll, which stood at 132 Wednesday, is still less than half the number who died in China from SARS, or severe acute respiratory syndrome. Scientists say there are many questions to be answered about the new virus, including just how easily it spreads and how severe it is.

The World Health Organization's emergencies chief told reporters on Wednesday that China was taking "extraordinary measures in the face of an extraordinary challenge" posed by the outbreak.

Dr. Michael Ryan spoke at a news conference after returning from a trip to Beijing to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping and other senior government leaders. He said the epidemic remains centered in the city of Wuhan and in Hubei province but that "information is being updated and is changing by the hour."

Ryan said the few cases of human-to-human spread of the virus outside China — in Japan, Germany, Canada and Vietnam — were of "great concern" and were part of the reason the U.N. health agency's director-general was reconvening a committee of experts Thursday. It will assess whether the outbreak should be declared a global emergency. To date, about 99% of the nearly 6,000 cases are in China. Ryan estimated

the death rate of the new virus at 2%, but said the figure was very preliminary. With fluctuating numbers of cases and deaths, scientists are only able to produce a rough estimate of the fatality rate and it's likely many milder cases of the virus are being missed.

In comparison, the SARS virus killed about 10% of people who caught it. The new virus is from the coronavirus family, which includes those that can cause the common cold as well as more serious illnesses such as SARS and MERS.

Ryan noted there were several aspects of the new virus outbreak that are extremely worrying, citing the recent rapid spike in cases in China. He said that while scientists believe the outbreak was sparked by an animal virus, it's unclear if there are other factors driving the epidemic.

"Without understanding that, it's very hard to put into context the current transmission dynamics," he said. Meanwhile, countries began evacuating their citizens from the Chinese city hardest-hit by the virus. Chartered planes carrying about 200 evacuees each arrived in Japan and the United States as other countries planned similar evacuations from the city of Wuhan, which authorities have shut down to try to contain the virus.

The first cases in the Middle East were confirmed Wednesday, a family of four from Wuhan that was visiting the United Arab Emirates. Airlines around the world announced they were cutting flights to China, and Hong Kong was suspending rail travel to and from the mainland at midnight.

The number of cases in China rose 1,459 from the previous day, a smaller increase than the 1,771 new cases reported Tuesday. Australia, Finland and Singapore were among those reporting new cases, as the number outside China topped 70. The vast majority are people who came from Wuhan. The U.S. plane arrived in California after



A girl wears a face mask as she play on a swing near the Yingwuzhou Yangtze River Bridge in Wuhan in central China's Hubei Province, Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2020.

Associated Press.

a refueling stop in Alaska. All 201 passengers, who included diplomats from the U.S. Consulate in Wuhan, passed health screenings in China and Anchorage, and were to undergo three days of monitoring at a Southern California military base to ensure they show no signs of the illness.

"The whole plane erupted into cheers when the crew welcomed them back to the United States," Dr. Anne Zink, Alaska's chief medical officer, told reporters in Anchorage.

Four passengers on the evacuation flight to Japan had coughs and fevers, and two were diagnosed with pneumonia. It wasn't clear whether they were infected with the new virus, which first appeared in Wuhan in December. Its symptoms, including cough and fever and in severe cases pneumonia, are similar to many other illnesses.

Takeo Aoyama, an employee at Nippon Steel Corp.'s subsidiary in Wuhan, told reporters he was relieved to return home.

"We were feeling increasingly uneasy as the situation developed so rapidly and we were still in the city," Aoyama said, his voice muffled by a white surgical mask.

Australia, New Zealand and Britain were among the latest countries to an-

nounce they are planning evacuations.

British health secretary Matt Hancock tweeted that "anyone who returns from Wuhan will be safely isolated for 14 days, with all necessary medical attention." The measures are a step up from those during the devastating 2014-16 Ebola outbreak, when returning travelers from West Africa were asked to monitor themselves for symptoms.

Mark Woolhouse, a professor of infectious disease epidemiology at the University of Edinburgh, said the steps are justified to prevent the introduction of the virus and its spread.

"There's always a balance between the draconian measures of public health and what people might want to do, and obviously it's regrettable if people who turn out not to have the virus are quarantined unnecessarily," he said.

The outbreak has affected international sporting events. The International Hockey Federation postponed Pro League games in China, and soccer, basketball and boxing qualifiers for the Tokyo Olympics in February have been moved outside of the country. In China's Hubei province, 17 cities including Wuhan have been locked down, trapping more than 50 million people in the

most far-reaching disease control measures ever imposed. WHO's director-general, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, commended China's response. The low number of infections outside China "is due in no small part to the extraordinary steps the government has taken to prevent the export of cases," he said. "They're doing that at the expense of their economy and other factors."

During the 2002-2003 SARS epidemic, China was slammed for hiding that outbreak for months, allowing it to spread unchecked before reporting it to the WHO. Even after inviting international experts to investigate the epidemic, SARS patients were moved from hospitals and driven around in ambulances to conceal the true extent of the virus' spread.

The source of the new virus and the full extent of its spread are still unknown. However, the World Health Organization said most cases reported to date "have been milder, with around 20% of those infected experiencing severe illness." Scientists expect many crucial questions about the virus' behavior will be answered in the coming weeks as the outbreak evolves and it becomes clearer how people are infected. □

Mexican president promises no return of criminal defamation

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said Wednesday he would denounce any proposed legal reforms that would bring back criminal defamation statutes or other laws that would impinge on the freedom of expression. López Obrador's comments came in response to questioning from Denise Dresser, a well-known Mexican journalist, who pressed him to respond to leaked documents from the Attorney General's Office. The working documents suggested a series of measures that could be used to

silence or harass journalists. "I don't have anything to do with the supposed reform," the president said, noting that the Attorney General's Office is an autonomous entity. But any legal reform would have to go through Mexico's congress, which is controlled by López Obrador's allies. López Obrador promised to not only not support such reforms, but to denounce it. "Of course, by conviction," he said. "We have the commitment to guarantee freedom of expression, of the manifestation of ideas,

the right to dissent." Earlier this month, the Inter-American Press Society expressed concern about reforms "that would turn defamation into a criminal offense, returning the country to an environment where journalists could go to jail for exercising their right to inform, criticize or comment." Mexico had decriminalized defamation in 2007. Dresser raised the question after noting that a Mexico City judge had ordered journalist Sergio Aguayo to pay \$24,000 (450,000 pesos) Tuesday to head off the seizure of his assets



In this Nov. 29, 2019 file photo, Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador listens to questions during his daily morning press conference at the National Palace in Mexico City.

Associated Press

as part of a lawsuit by former Coahuila state Gov. Humberto Moreira. Moreira sued him over a 2016 article that reported on Moreira's alleged corruption. Moreira is the former Institu-

tional Revolutionary Party chief. Moreira resigned as party leader when it was revealed that the Coahuila state debt rose from \$27 million to nearly \$3 billion during his tenure. □

AP Explains: The arrest of Peru powerbroker Keiko Fujimori

By M.RUEDA/ F.BRICENO
Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — A Peruvian judge on Tuesday ruled that opposition leader Keiko Fujimori must be held in prison for 15 months while she is investigated for possible money laundering. Fujimori is an influential power broker in the Andean nation and is accused of taking money from Brazilian construction giant Odebrecht. She says she is innocent. Here are more details on her case.

WHO IS KEIKO FUJIMORI?

Fujimori is a two-time presidential candidate and heir to one of the country's most powerful political dynasties. Her father Alberto Fujimori was president in the 1990s and still divides public opinion in Peru. Keiko Fujimori lost the 2016 presidential election by less than 1% of the vote but her party, Popular Force, gained a commanding majority of seats in the nation's congress, which it later used to start impeachment proceedings against then-President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski. Popular Force obtained documents that showed Kuczynski had owned a consulting firm that took hefty sums from the Brazilian company, which has acknowledged paying out



In this handout photo provided by Peru's Palace of Justice Press Office, Keiko Fujimori, the daughter of Peru's former President Alberto Fujimori and opposition leader, center, is escorted by police inside the courtroom in Lima, Peru, Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2020.

Associated Press

\$800 million in bribes to politicians in a dozen countries. Facing impeachment and little support in congress, Kuczynski resigned in 2018.

WHAT IS SHE ACCUSED OF?

Prosecutors maintain that Fujimori took more than a million dollars from Odebrecht herself, for her 2011 and 2016 presidential campaigns, violating the nation's laws. Prosecutors also accuse Fujimori of hiding the money through a complex network of dozens of frontmen. Fujimori claims she is innocent and is being persecuted by rivals who want to destroy her political movement. In October of 2018, a judge

ruled that Fujimori should be jailed while prosecutors investigated her, arguing that she could flee the country if she was not placed in custody. That sentence was overturned last year by a high court, which said her human rights had been violated and that she could not be imprisoned if she hadn't been found guilty of a crime.

While Fujimori was in prison, her American husband held a two-week long hunger strike to demand her freedom.

WHY IS SHE GOING BACK TO PRISON?

After Fujimori was freed from prison last year, pros-

ecutors went back to the courts with new evidence of her alleged dealings with Odebrecht. On Tuesday, Judge Victor Zuñiga ruled that Fujimori should return to prison because there is probable likelihood that she was involved in money laundering and because she could still evade justice by escaping from Peru.

WHY IS HER ARREST IMPORTANT?

Fujimori's arrest is part of a broader crackdown on corruption that Peruvian prosecutors have been waging for years. Over the past decade four former Peruvian presidents have been issued arrest

warrants for their alleged dealings with Odebrecht. One former president hid in the United States, was captured and is now awaiting extradition. Another former president committed suicide at his home in Lima as police officers got ready to arrest him. Peru's current President Martin Vizcarra dissolved the nation's congress last year after parliamentarians refused to back his anti-corruption measures.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

Fujimori will have to prepare her defense from behind prison bars, and face a lengthy trial. Meanwhile her political influence is diminishing. In Sunday's election Popular Force only gained 12 seats in Peru's 130 member congress. Previously the party held 72 seats.

The party has been deeply divided since 2018, when Keiko Fujimori's brother, congressman Kenji Fujimori, was expelled from its ranks. Their father, Alberto Fujimori was condemned to 25 years in prison for committing human rights abuses. But many Peruvians still praise the elder Fujimori, arguing that he fixed a broken economy and defeated guerrilla groups that terrorized the country in the 1990s. □

LOCAL



ORANJESTAD — The Happy Community Initiative (HCI) is a visitor charity program that helps Aruban teens to stay on the right track by offering high-quality after school programs. One of the ways to donate to this unique cause is by booking a tour with Experitours, or better; an experience because this dynamic tour company offers great tours with personal attention that go beyond the standard offerings.

Mark Benson, owner of Experitours: "We are a small tour company that started three years ago and we are doing daytime historic walking tours. In the evening we organize food tours. Since 2018 we are also operating the California Lighthouse." All their guides have gone through a thorough training about how to give tours and to gain knowledge about Aruba's history. Experitours also had them participating in the Aruba Certification Program. Additionally the experts did some courses with the international organization Aquila which trains tour guides. "The walking tour is a tour that shows Aruba's capital Oranjestad in about thirty different sites like monuments, landmarks, important buildings and explains about the island's culture. Guests get to taste two local snacks, pastechi and pan bati. We share our local customs with our guests and they love it. You really get the local flavor," Mark says. The evening walk is more focused on food and visits five different restaurants. The concept behind this tour is 'taste the world without a trip' and you taste five different cuisines: Aruba, Dutch, Cuban, Caribbean and Italian. The Lighthouse is another excursion they offer where you can climb the 117 steps to get to the top and view an unbeatable 360 degrees panorama of the island. "In 2016 the Monumentfunds finalized a one million dollar renovation of the Lighthouse and they made it accessible to go up which was not the case before except for the lighthouse keeper. 2018 we got the right to manage it, it is open from 9am to 7pm. We have two local experts available to explain you about anything."

Experitours supports Happy Community Initiative "If you have a soul as a company you should do this, giving feels good"



Book and support

Experitours collaborates with HCI for a few reasons, says Mark. "In Aruba we have a lot of foundations but you cannot support them all. The Happy Community Initiative are already active in the field of giving, they know which are the organizations that work honestly, they have done their research and we trust them to use the funds wisely. We decided to support this initiative because of that. We have had great response from the guests since we added the \$1 donation to every booking." He explains that everything is very transparent as each booking show the \$1 as a donation to HCI and links to their website

in case guests wish to know more about it. "Basically the \$1 charge is for every person that is booked. It is pretty common for Americans to donate and we have had no complaints at all, only positive feedback. We are very happy to support this initiative." Book your walking tour and learn more about Aruba's history, make a reservation at <https://arubawalkingtours.com/bookings/> or email info@arubawalkingtours.com or call +297 699.0995 – USD 1 goes to support the Happy Community Initiative.

Continued on Page 14

Our Newest Column is All about YOUTH and Happiness

ORANJESTAD — Our newest column Happy Community Initiative is published bi-weekly on Thursdays in Aruba Today. We inform you about this dynamic, new project from a different angle to give you a complete feel, so follow us and stay engaged!

The Happy Community Initiative is a visitor charity program that you can help strengthen Aruba's community by donating to good causes. CEDE Aruba, a dynamic community foundation, the Aruba

Timeshare Association (ATSA), the Aruba Tourism Authority and several companies collaborate in this platform for visitors who would like to make a donation, but also volunteer in the future. The priority is set to support projects for Aruban youths.

CEDE Aruba will make sure that the donations reach meaningful projects of local non-profits, based upon quality and transparency of finances of the offered programs. In this manner, you can be assured that your donation

will reach its goal! With your donation, you support Aruban children with after school programs, mentorship activities and social support.

You can donate at the kiosks in the lobby of several hotels (Costa Linda, Playa Linda, Casa del Mar, Paradise Beach Villas and La Cabana) or you can donate on the website: <https://happycommunityaruba.org/donate>. Goal is to raise \$110K to set up the program, at this moment \$4550.00 is collected. Help us reach our goal!

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Sunday: 9:00am - 6:00pm



Experitours supports Happy Community Initiative

“If you have a soul as a company you should do this, giving feels good”

Continued from Page 13

Great goal

HCI's goal is very good in his opinion as nowadays most people have to work more than one job so parents many times cannot stay at home with their child. “In the past this was solved by leaving the kids with grandma however nowadays even grandparents continue to work to make ends meet. There are programs where the teens can get after school care, not only in the sense of education, but also the play part to learn their social skills grow. It is a much needed and noble cause.” He sees it very worthwhile to invest in the youngsters and making sure that they do not go on a bad path which is very easy with all going on in social media. “They are the future of Aruba. We need to invest in our children but also in trained adults to guide them where parents can't. With HCI you do all of that. It has as short term affect because the kids are not negatively on the streets but it has also a long term affect as they will be a key part of our community in the future.” If we want to continue to have a good base of locals and not losing our values, it is very important to invest in the next generation at an early stage, Mark concludes.

His advice to business owners would be to realize that guests are more and more focusing on the values of the company they choose for to organize their vacation activities. “Is this a family company or is this a sustainable company or is this a company supporting charities and so on. To choose a sustainable goal is important and it is beneficial to your company. We selected HCI which is a great and easy to manage initiative also backed up by CEDE which has a strong credibility in the community. There is nothing to lose, it only shows that you are caring. If you have a soul as a company you should do this. Giving feels good.” □

WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

MARGARITA MONDAY
\$5 Margaritas & DJ 9pm-12am

TITO'S TUESDAY
\$5 Tito's Cocktails & Double Shots

WING IT WEDNESDAY
\$1 Wings All Day Long & DJ 9pm-12am

THROWBACK THURSDAY
\$5 TBT Cocktails & Snack Platter

SIP HAPPENING FRIDAY
2 for 1 Balashi Beer & Live Band 9pm-12am

STATE OF MIND SATURDAY
\$5 on Specialty Cocktails
\$6 Beef Taco's & \$8 Nachos & DJ 9pm-12am

CHILL DOWN SUNDAY
2 for 1 Chill Beer & DJ 9pm-12am

HAPPY HOURS

SAT-THU 5-6PM & 10-11PM
FRIDAY 5-7PM & 10-11PM

\$4

BALASHI & CHILL DRAFT

\$5

HOUSE WINES

\$5

SELECTION OF MARGARITAS AND COCKTAILS

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No Plastic,
No Foam,
No Oxybenzone,
Choose Zero!

The Government of Aruba officially announces that the import, production and selling of plastic, oxybenzone and styrofoam are forbidden per January 1st, 2019. Sanctions will apply from January 1st, 2020.

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Bijoux Terner Boutique | R-Glass
Curated Lab | Hungry Piranha
The Lazy Lizard | The Market
Shalom Body & Soul Spa

50 years visiting Aruba



PALM BEACH — Recently, Kimberley Richardson of the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure to honor Aruba's loyal and friendly visitors as Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba. The Emerald Ambassador certificate is presented to guests who visit Aruba 35 years and more consecutively.

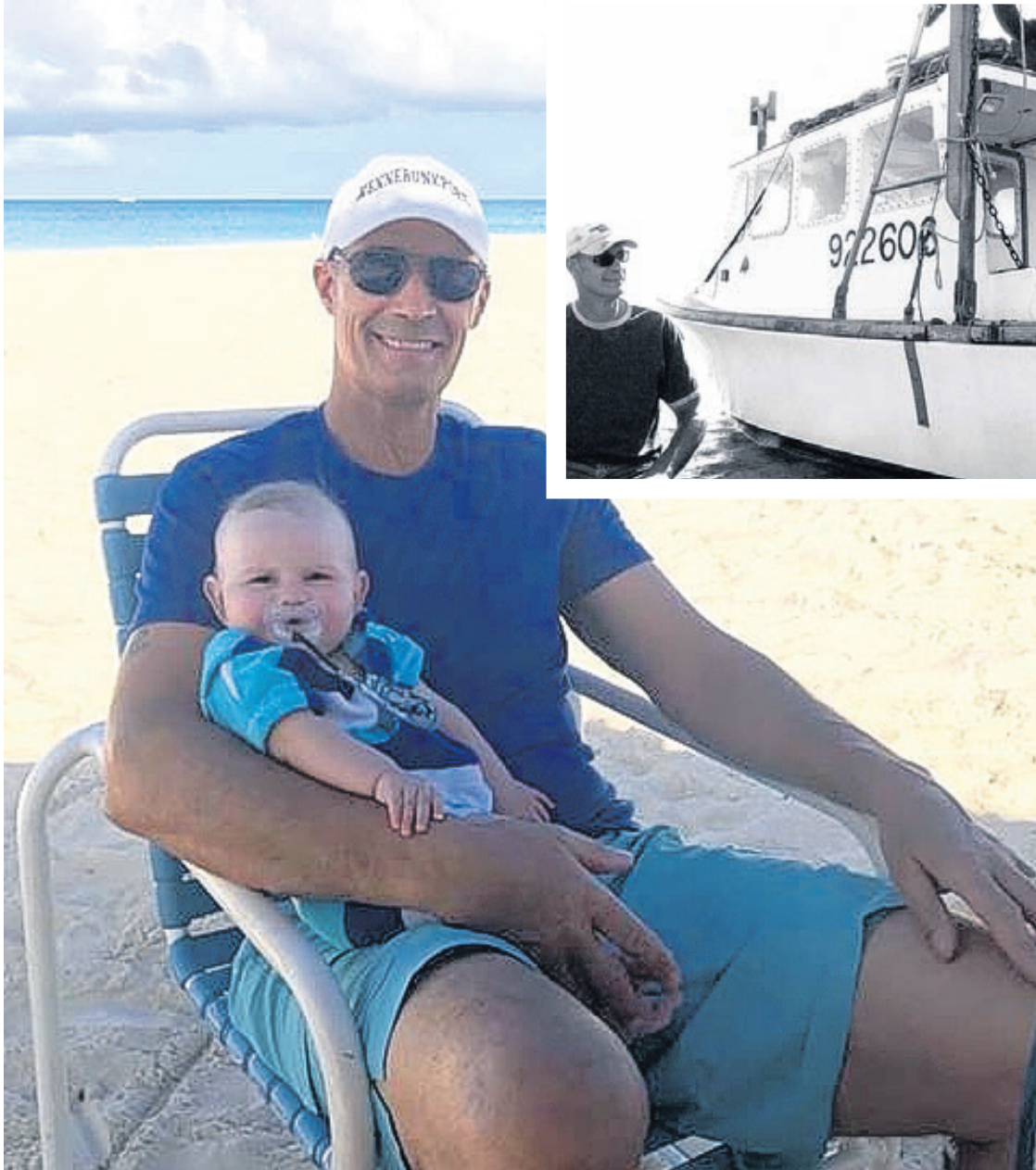
The honorees were couple **Ben & Karen Benita** from USA. This couple has been visiting Aruba for 50 years! The first time couple Benita visited Aruba was in 1970, to celebrate their honeymoon. They fell so in-love with the island that as soon as they got back to USA, they got a dog, and named him Aruba. The couple went on by saying that many friends in the states were always asking them "Where did you get the name Aruba". That is the point when couple Benita started recommending Aru-

ba to everyone they know. In the mid 80s couple Benita even started hanging the Aruban flag together with the American flag outside their house. These honorees not only fell in-love with the island, but also brought family, grandchildren, friends, and neighbors to Aruba.

The ceremony was one of importance to us because honoring visitors who have been coming to Aruba for over 35 years is incredibly rare and IT was a very memorable moment for all of us.

Richardson together with the representatives of the Holiday Inn Beach Resort & Casino presented the certificate to the honorees, handed over some presents and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home. □

Loyal visitors of Aruba mourns loss of beloved fishing boat captain



ARUNDEL, US — Aruba Today was contacted this week by Hayley Brown with a heart touching story. She wrote to us: "This is the story of my dad who tragically passed away a few days ago. I have been visiting Aruba with my parents for over 20 years and it was always my job to get the Aruba Today from the hotel lobby for him to read on the beach." Captain Arnold 'Joe' Nickerson IV died after Nickerson's boat the 'Hayley Ann' sank.

The **News Center Maine** ran the story on January 25:

"Our minds are racing about what could have happened. He knew what he was doing," said Hayley Brown. Hayley Brown said she is in shock, after her dad Captain Joe Nickerson died at sea. "It has to have been something that was just quick and completely out of our hands and something he couldn't control," said Brown. The Coast Guard said Nickerson's boat, the 'Hayley Ann' which is named after Hayley and her mom, capsized off the coast of Portland Thursday. Another crewman, Chris Pinkham, also died. "We've been in touch with his wife," said Brown. Nickerson was a 4th generation lobsterman. He grew up fishing at Cape Porpoise in Kennebunkport. "It was the only thing he knew. He could have never done any other job," said Brown. Hayley is an only child and said when she was younger, she would help her dad get ready for fishing trips. "He used to let me paint the buoys, but I would take too long. I was trying to be too precise," said Brown. While she said he couldn't recruit her, he was hoping to share his passion one day with her one-year-old son. She said knowing that can't happen now, is the hardest part. "My son won't get to grow up and know my dad the way I did. He was so excited to one day share his love of fishing with him," said Brown.

Her dad has been a member at Costa Linda Beach Resort since 1995. In the picture you can see him and his wife at the Natural Bridge during their first trip to Aruba for their 10th anniversary. □







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EAGLE BEACH — The Double Down Sports bar & Grill is not just any bar. This great place is the brother of Eagle Aruba Resort & Casino and has it all ready for you during the biggest day in sports. But there is more. Uncle Tony's Piz-za welcomes you at this Big Game Sunday too. You see, Eagle Aruba Resort & Casino offers twice the fun. Join in at the best ambiance and enjoy their attractive food and drinks menu!

It's all but certain one of the largest crowds to watch Super Bowl 53 in a local sports bar will be at Double Down Sports Bar and Grill. That's because this popular spot is located at the Eagle Aruba Resort & Casino directly across Eagle Beach. The bar is often described as the ultimate sports bar in Aruba. With a capacity of over 250 sports fans, Double Down's features more than 34 HDTVs, 8 Giant Screens inside and outside, a massive horseshoe bar, an outstanding Stadium Style Buffet on this day and a wide selection of beers, wine and cocktails. Right next door to Double Down is Eagle Aruba Casino, and under the same ownership, Eagle Aruba Casino hosts 138 of the latest slot machine and 6 table games.

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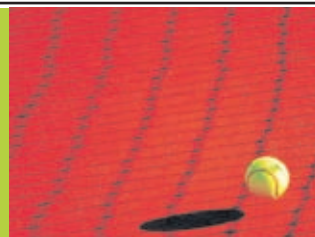
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RESORT & CASINO

About the Casino

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SPORTS



Tiger Woods watches his tee shot on the fifth hole during the pro-am round of the Farmer's Insurance golf tournament on the South Course at Torrey Pines Golf Course on Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2020, in San Diego.

Associated Press

A new tour without Tiger is no tour at all

By DOUG FERGUSON
AP Golf Writer

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Jay Monahan was at Torrey Pines for the annual players meeting, most of it pertaining to the potential of a financial windfall for top players. Five days later, after so much chatter and speculation, the possibility had moved close enough to reality that the PGA Tour commissioner felt compelled to return. After all, Tiger Woods was five shots behind. Monahan thought he should be there if Woods were to set the record with career win No. 83.

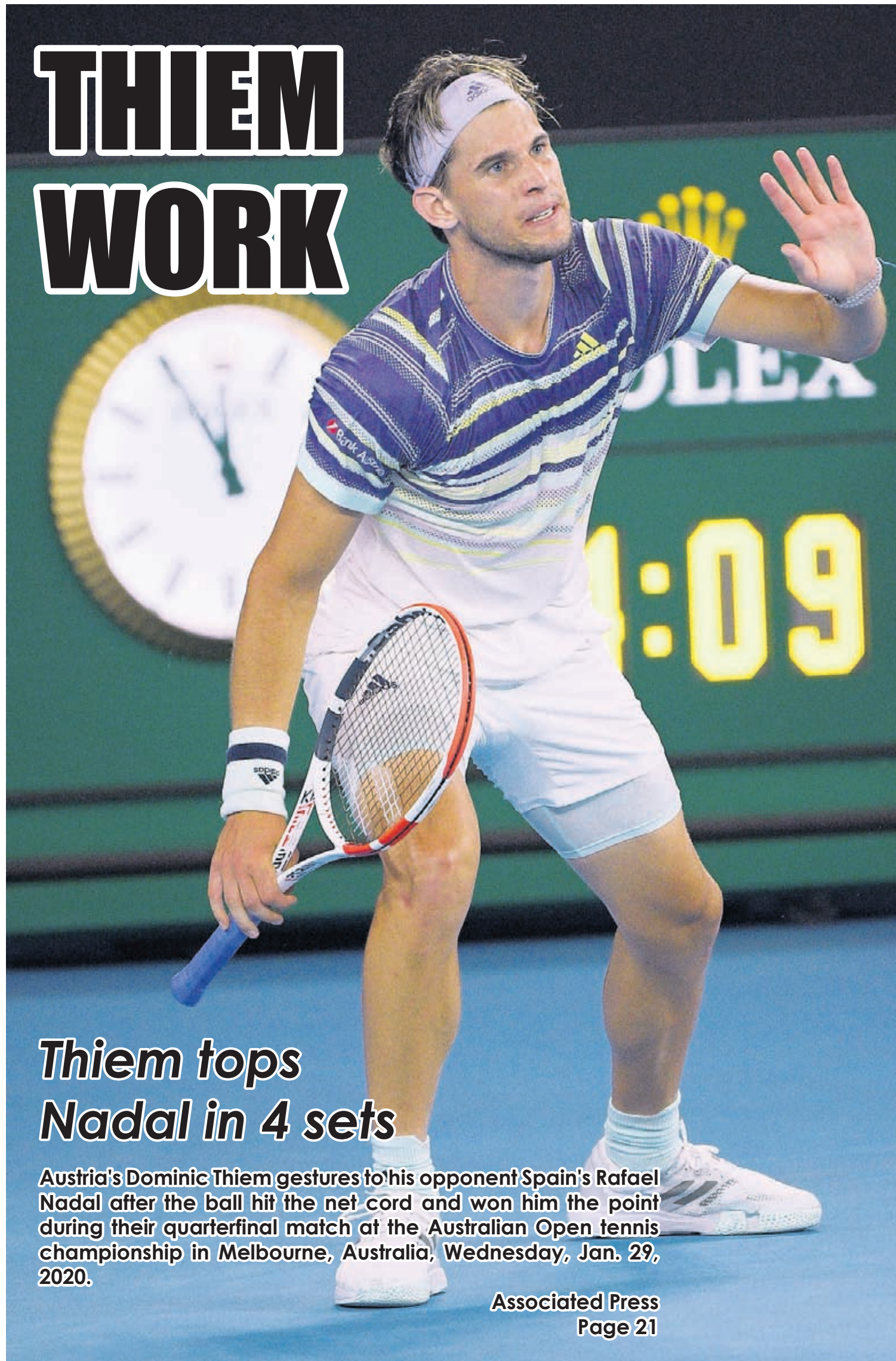
As for the rumors of a new golf tour targeting the top 48 players?

Odds of that happening might be a bit longer.

The concept of a world tour — the latest name is "Premier Golf League" — has been around for the better part of six years.

Continued on Page 23

THIEM WORK



Thiem tops Nadal in 4 sets

Austria's Dominic Thiem gestures to his opponent Spain's Rafael Nadal after the ball hit the net cord and won him the point during their quarterfinal match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2020.

Associated Press
Page 21

Blues get first SO win, beat Flames 5-4

CALGARY, Alberta (AP) — For David Perron, Calgary has become his home away from home.

Up against a team he's always thrived against and in a building he enjoys playing in, Perron had a goal and an assist in regulation and added a shootout goal to help the St. Louis Blues beat the Calgary Flames 5-4 on Tuesday night.

Perron has 17 goals in 39 career games against the Flames, including 12 goals in 20 games at the Scotiabank Saddledome.

"I like the old barn, maybe. I don't know," said Perron, when asked about his success historically against Calgary. "I always have fun coming up to Canada and playing here, even when I was back with the Oilers."

Alex Steen, Jaden Schwartz and Zach Sanford also scored in regulation for the Blues, who got their first win the tiebreaker in four games this season. Jordan Binnington stopped 27 shots to improve to 23-8-5.

Sean Monahan scored twice, and Matthew Tkachuk and Mark Jankowski also had goals for the Flames, who were 5-0 in shootouts. Cam Talbot finished with 30 saves.

The Flames were 3 for 3 on the power play during regulation, and got a fourth man-advantage in overtime, but squandered it.

"It's obviously a big kill," said Blues captain Alex Pietrangolo. "Four-on-three's are never easy, especially late in the game when you're tired, legs and brain are a little tired. Good time for us to step up and kill that."

Perron and Ryan O'Reilly scored on St. Louis' first two shootout attempts, while Monahan and Tkachuk missed their tries.

In a wild back-and-forth game in which both teams blew two leads, St. Louis tied it 4-4 less than a minute into the third period.

After Andrew Mangiapane hit the goal post at one end, the Blues raced up ice on a 2-on-1 with Sanford keeping the puck and

ripping a shot over Talbot's glove.

St. Louis then scored what appeared to be the go-ahead goal less than three minutes later when Talbot muffed Perron's shot off the wing. However, interim head coach Geoff Ward challenged the play for offside and after video review, the goal was waved off. "I kind of had a feeling right away," said Perron, who extended his point streak to four games (2-4-6). "Even going through the line I was asking, 'is it offside?' Coming back to the bench I saw coach right away. If it's a quick challenge like that, it doesn't go our way very often."

St. Louis lost 3-1 in Vancouver on Monday night in its first game back after

an eight-day layoff. It was the Flames' first game in 10 days.

"It's tough to come off (the break) and have two back-to-back games against teams that play heavy and have speed," O'Reilly said. "It is good though. We got two points tonight. Last night they were available and we didn't get them. We have to keep building and keep growing our game and get back on track here."

After taking a 3-2 lead after 20 minutes, thanks to two goals in the final couple minutes of the first period, the Blues' second lead of the night was erased at 4:40 of the second when Monahan scored off a pass from Johnny Gaudreau, for Calgary's third power-play



St. Louis Blues' Ryan O'Reilly, right, celebrates with David Perron after scoring against the Calgary Flames in the shootout of an NHL hockey game Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2020, in Calgary, Alberta. Associated Press

goal. Five minutes later, the Flames surged back in front when Jankowski converted a centering feed from Sam Bennett.

It was the second goal in two games for Jankowski after he started the season without a goal in the first 38 games.

Calgary had a chance

to go up by two, but on his second breakaway of the period, Gaudreau was thwarted once again by Binnington. After a deke to his backhand didn't work on his first try, he tried to shoot high blocker side, but again was denied by the Blues' goalie, who also got a pad on the rebound. □

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Captain Herby would catch the fish to be served at the restaurant the same day. That concept still lives, what is 'hooked' during the day is cooked in the evening at the restaurant.

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Hall of Fame DE Doleman dies at age 58

By DAVE CAMPBELL
AP Pro Football Writer

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Hall of Fame defensive end Chris Doleman, whose enviable blend of speed and power made him one of the NFL's most feared pass rushers during 15 seasons in the league, has died. The longtime Minnesota Vikings star, who had 150½ career sacks to rank fifth on the all-time list, was 58.

The Vikings and the Pro Football Hall of Fame expressed their condolences in separate statements confirming Doleman's death on Tuesday night. Doleman had surgery two years ago to remove a brain tumor after being diagnosed with glioblastoma, an aggressive type of cancer that killed U.S. Sen. John McCain of Arizona in 2018.

The diagnosis and surgery kept Doleman from attending Super Bowl 52 in Minneapolis, requiring a five-week hospital stay in At-



In this Dec. 15, 2013, file photo, former Minnesota Viking Chris Doleman acknowledges the crowd during a ceremony honoring the All Mall of America Field team during halftime of an NFL football game between the Vikings and the Philadelphia Eagles in Minneapolis.

Associated Press

lanta, but later that year he was able to travel to Canton, Ohio, for the Hall of Fame induction ceremony that included former teammate Randy Moss. That fall, he married his wife, LaTresa Doleman, and they traveled to Minnesota together

for the team's Ring of Honor induction ceremony for the late Dennis Green, one of his coaches with the Vikings.

"Just the thought of catching up with everybody pulls you through those dark times," Doleman said then

in an interview with the St. Paul Pioneer Press.

Doleman returned to U.S. Bank Stadium as recently as last October, for the Ring of Honor induction for former teammate Steve Jordan. Former teammate and fellow Hall of Famer Randall McDaniel pushed Doleman to and from the on-field ceremony in a wheelchair. Doleman, an Indianapolis native who played in college at Pittsburgh before being drafted by the Vikings with the fourth overall pick in 1985, was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2012.

He converted from linebacker to defensive end and spent his first nine seasons with the Vikings, collecting a league-high 21 sacks in 1989 while forming a fierce pass-rushing tandem with defensive tackle Keith Millard, who had 18 sacks himself that year for the NFC North champions. He was a two-time first-team All-Pro and eight-time

Pro Bowl selection who played in 232 of a possible 236 regular-season games. The 6-foot-5 Doleman played two seasons for Atlanta and three seasons with San Francisco before returning to Minnesota to finish his career in 1999.

"Chris was a great example for players past and present, as he embodied all the best characteristics of a Viking — resilience, toughness and a competitive spirit," the Vikings said. "Chris always carried himself with dignity and class. Vikings fans worldwide will greatly miss him."

Hall of Fame president and CEO David Baker said witnessing Doleman's baptism in the Jordan River during a Hall of Fame trip to Israel was "one of the honors" of his life.

"The legacy of Chris Doleman will live forever in Canton, Ohio, for generations to learn from how he lived a life of courage and character," Baker said. □

No. 1 Nadal upset by Thiem in Australian Open quarterfinals

By **HOWARD FENDRICH**

AP Tennis Writer

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)

— Outplayed at his own brand of physical tennis for much of the match, Rafael Nadal finally claimed a set to try to start a comeback against Dominic Thiem. Nadal marked the moment by hopping in a crouch at the baseline and vigorously pumping his right arm four times.

Soon, though, he was back in trouble. And eventually, his bid to tie Roger Federer's record of 20 Grand Slam titles by winning the Australian Open was over with a quarterfinal loss Wednesday to Thiem — a younger version of Nadal himself.

Thiem's 7-6 (3), 7-6 (4), 4-6, 7-6 (6) victory over the top-seeded Nadal lasted 4 hours, 10 minutes because of so many lengthy, electrifying points. One rather memorable one featured Thiem stumbling onto his backside before popping up and keeping the ball in play until Nadal made a mistake.

"He's playing with a lot of energy ... (and) determination. So well done for him," Nadal said. "I honestly didn't play a bad match." Thiem reached his fifth major semifinal but first somewhere other than at the French Open, the place that is Nadal's domain.

Of more significance: The outcome ended Nadal's career-best streak of making at least the semifinals at seven consecutive Grand Slam tournaments, a span during which he earned three trophies.

"If you want to have a chance against him, one of the all-time greats, everything needs to work in your game," the fifth-seeded Thiem said.

The last time Nadal didn't get to the final four at a major? Also at the Australian Open, where he also went out in the quarterfinals two years ago before finishing as the runner-up to Novak Djokovic in 2019. That was Nadal's fourth defeat in a final at Melbourne Park since he won his lone title at the place in 2009.



Austria's Dominic Thiem serves to Spain's Rafael Nadal during their quarterfinal match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2020.

Associated Press

He's won two at Wimbledon, four at the U.S. Open and 12 at the French Open. Asked what he wished he'd done differently against Thiem, Nadal replied: "Win any tiebreak."

Thiem had been 0-5 against Nadal at the majors, including losses in the final at Roland Garros each of the past two years.

But this one was different. The defining statistic: Thiem won exactly twice as many points that featured nine or more shots, 24-12.

"Just an unbelievable match. Like, epic," Thiem said. "A very high level from both of us."

Thiem managed to hang in there with Nadal on physical baseline exchanges, trading groundstroke for groundstroke and picking the proper spots to move forward.

Or to describe it another way: Thiem was out-Nadaling Nadal, the ultimate grinder who never met a point that was too long or too grueling.

"Even from difficult positions," Nadal said, praising Thiem's quickness and power, "he was able to produce amazing shots."

Now Thiem will play No. 7 Alexander Zverev on Friday for a berth in the title

match.

Zverev reached his first major semifinal anywhere by overcoming a terrible start Wednesday and putting together a 1-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 victory over three-time Grand Slam champion Stan Wawrinka.

So instead of Nadal, 33, against Wawrinka, 34, it'll be Zverev, 22, against Thiem, 26, a couple of members of the new generation trying to collect a breakthrough Slam title.

"I think it's the first time I am playing a Grand Slam semifinal and I am the older player," Thiem said with a chuckle.

The first two sets Wednesday sets were remarkably similar: Nadal would go up by a break, then Thiem would break back and take it in a tiebreaker. The first lasted 67 minutes, the second 69.

Nadal was flustered by a warning from chair umpire Aurelie Tourte for a time violation, citing him for taking more than the allotted 25 seconds before serving. Nadal termed the call "amazing," complaining that the previous point was comprised of an exhausting 19 shots and so the clock shouldn't have started when it did (something which is at the chair umpire's discretion).

"You don't like the good tennis," he told Tourte. "You don't like the good tennis." Later, he gave Tourte a sarcastic thumb's up after she told him he hesitated too long before trying to challenge a line call.

Thiem's biggest hiccups came as the end was near. There was the break that ceded the third set, the one celebrated so enthusiastically by Nadal.

There was another break when Thiem served for the victory at 5-4 in the fourth but was undone by a series of jitters-induced mistakes. There were three off-the-mark forehands, with a double-fault mixed in for good measure.

"Such a really mentally tough situation," Thiem said. "Couldn't handle it." □

Coco Gauff to play Indian Wells for 1st time in March

INDIAN WELLS, Calif.

(AP) — Coco Gauff, the 15-year-old rising American star, will make her first appearance at the BNP Paribas Open, joining all the top 75-ranked men's and women's players in the world.

Gauff reached the fourth round at the Australian Open last week. Last year, she made the fourth round at Wimbledon and the third round at the U.S.

Open. Nine former champions are among the field for the tournament that runs March 9-22 at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden. Last year's winners were Dominic Thiem and Bianca Andreescu. Other former winners are Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, Naomi Osaka, Simona Halep, Serena Williams and Victoria Azarenka.

Current women's world



United States' Coco Gauff, right, and compatriot Caty McNally play in their third round doubles match against Japan's Shuko Aoyama and Ena Shibahara at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Monday, Jan. 27, 2020.

Associated Press

No. 1 Ash Barty is also in the field announced Wednesday.

The remaining spots in the draws will be filled by the winners of the qualifying

tournament in March, the top two American women and men with the most points in the Oracle Challenger Series, and wild cards to be announced. □

Middleton scores 51 as Bucks beat Wizards 151-131

By The Associated Press

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Khris Middleton scored a career-high 51 points in the absence of injured teammate Giannis Antetokounmpo, leading the Milwaukee Bucks to a 151-131 victory over the Washington Wizards on Tuesday night.

Middleton, hoping to be chosen an All-Star reserve for the second straight year on Thursday, helped the Bucks hold off a second-half Wizards rally. Middleton also had 10 rebounds and six assists.

Milwaukee (41-6) scored a franchise-record 88 points in the first half, finished with its highest total of the season and won its ninth straight game despite the absence of Antetokounmpo, who sat out with a right shoulder injury.

Bradley Beal led the Wizards (15-31) with 47 points, his second straight 40-point game and sixth of the season.

76ERS 115, WARRIORS 104

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Wearing No. 24 in honor of Kobe Bryant, Joel Embiid scored 24 points in his first game in three weeks, leading Philadelphia to the victory.

Embiid and the rest of the Sixers wore No. 24 and No. 8 Bryant jerseys in warmups in honor of the Los Angeles Lakers star, who was killed Sunday in a helicopter



Milwaukee Bucks' Khris Middleton puts up a shot against Washington Wizards' Troy Brown Jr. during the second half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2020, in Milwaukee.

Associated Press

crash. Embiid was granted permission from Hall of Famer Bobby Jones to wear the retired No. 24 instead of his usual 21 for his first game since he tore a ligament in a finger in his left hand.

Philadelphia's Ben Simmons had "Mamba Forever" and "RIP Gigi" (for Bryant's daughter, among the nine killed in the crash) on each sneaker and scored 17 points.

D'Angelo Russell led Golden State with 28 points.

Glenn Robinson III had 20.

CELTICS 109, HEAT 101

MIAMI (AP) — Gordon Hayward had 29 points and nine rebounds, and the Celtics led virtually the entire way. Jaylen Brown scored 25 points for Boston, and Kemba Walker added 16 points and eight assists. Daniel Theis finished with 10 points and 11 rebounds.

Goran Dragic led Miami with 23 points and Jimmy Butler scored 20. Bam Adebayo had 16 points and 10

rebounds for the Heat, who lost at home to an Eastern Conference opponent for the first time in 14 games this season.

PELICANS 125, CAVALIERS 111

CLEVELAND (AP) — Zion Williamson scored 14 points — all inside — in an uneventful NBA road debut, helping the Pelicans to the victory.

Playing in just his fourth game, Williamson added nine rebounds in 30 minutes, his most as a pro. He didn't do anything spectacular or particularly crowd pleasing, but that hardly mattered to the Pelicans, who are just happy to have the hyped rookie on the floor and healthy. Jrue Holiday scored 26 points for New Orleans, and Brandon Ingram had 24.

Collin Sexton scored 24 for the Cavs, who have lost eight of nine. Rookie Kevin Porter Jr. scored 21 points, and Larry Nance Jr. had 17 points and 11 rebounds.

RAPTORS 130, HAWKS 114

TORONTO (AP) — Kyle Lowry had 12 points and 11 assists while becoming Toronto's career assists leader, and the Raptors earned their season-best eighth straight win.

Serge Ibaka had 24 points

and 10 rebounds and Pascal Siakam added 24 points as the Raptors won their 10th in a row over Atlanta. Toronto center Marc Gasol scored 10 points but was unable to return after leaving early in the third because of a sore left hamstring. Gasol missed 12 games because of a strained left hamstring between Dec. 18 and Jan. 12. With his ninth assist, a long outlet pass to Terence Davis in the fourth, Lowry moved past Jose Calderon (3,770) on the team's career list.

John Collins had 28 points and 12 rebounds for the Hawks, and Trae Young had 18 points and 13 assists.

SUNS 133, MAVERICKS 104

DALLAS (AP) — Devin Booker scored 20 of his 32 points in the third quarter, Deandre Ayton had a season-high 31 points and the Suns never trailed.

Booker started the scoring in the third before the ball had even been thrown in, making a free throw after the last of three first-half technicals against Dallas was called against Tim Hardaway Jr. after the half-time buzzer.

With the head start from Booker, the Suns outscored the Mavericks 48-22 in the third on their way to surpassing last season's win total of 19 with their fourth victory in the past five road games.

Luka Doncic scored 21 points for the Mavericks. Jalen Brunson and J.J. Barrea each had 15.

GRIZZLIES 104, NUGGETS 96

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Dillon Brooks scored 24 points and Jonas Valanciunas had 23 points and 12 rebounds, leading the Grizzlies to their third straight win.

Ja Morant had 14 points as Memphis led from start to finish. Jaren Jackson Jr. had 10 points and blocked a career-high seven shots. Denver's Nikola Jokic had 25 points and 13 rebounds for his 22nd double-double in 28 games. Jerami Grant had 21 points, including 13 in the fourth quarter. □

Shiffrin to skip World Cup races at Sochi Olympics course

World Cup leader Mikaela Shiffrin is skipping this weekend's races in Russia in order to get some rest. The U.S. ski team said Tuesday on Twitter that Shiffrin "is taking the week off to rest and get a solid training block in." It's the second straight year that Shiffrin has opted to skip a return to Sochi and the course used for the 2014 Olympics. Shiffrin is opting out of a downhill on Saturday and a super-G on Sunday despite being second and first, respectively, in the season-long discipline standings.

The 24-year-old American has carefully managed her schedule in building a clear lead in the overall standings. She padded her lead over Federica Brignone by winning twice in three speed races in Bulgaria last weekend. Shiffrin won the slalom gold medal at the Sochi Olympics but has not returned to compete at the Rosa Khutor course.



United States' Mikaela Shiffrin is cheered by a US flag as she smiles on the podium after winning an alpine ski, women's World Cup super-G, in Bansko, Bulgaria, Sunday, Jan. 26, 2020.

Associated Press

Last March, she chose to rest instead of make the long journey for two speed races that were eventually canceled due to weather conditions.

Shiffrin's decision then was rewarded by winning three of the final six races to complete a dominating season with a third straight overall World Cup title.

The U.S. team noted that snow and rain is also forecast for this weekend in Sochi. □

A new tour without Tiger is no tour at all

Continued from Page 18

Talk was renewed late last year when the British-based World Golf Group began making the rounds in the Bahamas and Australia, this time with an influx of capital from various sources, primarily Saudi Arabia.

Its idea is to invigorate golf by putting together 12 four-man teams that would be required to play 18 events — 10 of them in the U.S. — that feature 54 holes, no cut and a shotgun start to fit a five-hour broadcast window. Total prize money would be \$240 million, and the top player could earn as much as \$50 million.

More pertinent were a few missing details.

Is there a broadcast partner? Corporate sponsors? Any commitments from players?

And the biggest question of all: Does it have Tiger Woods?

Because without Woods, it doesn't stand a chance.

Publicly, the PGA Tour and European Tour said they would not comment on any tour, real or imagined, except their own.

Monahan, however, found it worthy enough to send his players a memo late Mon-

day afternoon for those who weren't at Torrey Pines, or those who had never heard of the concept until a question was raised at the end of the meeting.

In the memo, obtained by The Associated Press, Monahan says no one from World Golf Group has contacted the PGA Tour. The tour's information is from players who were, and from golf industry partners.

Monahan mentioned the PGA Tour's financial strength and stability through longtime sponsorship and television deals that it will honor, and he reminded players of the releases required to play other tours. And then he made it clear the PGA Tour would not be working with Premier Golf League, as the group suggested was its intent.

"If the Team Golf Concept or another iteration of this structure becomes a reality in 2022 or at any time before or after, our members will have to decide whether they want to continue to be a member of the PGA Tour or play on a new series," the memo said.

Talk about risk and reward. The PGA Tour is wrapping up negotiations on a new broadcast rights deal that



Tiger Woods watches his tee shot on the second hole of the South Course at Torrey Pines Golf Course during the final round of the Farmers Insurance golf tournament Sunday, Jan. 26, 2020, in San Diego.

Associated Press

Sports Business Journal pegged at a 60% increase. One player was asked what came out of the meeting. He smiled and said, "How much money we're going to be making."

Another player, speaking on condition of anonymity because it was a private meeting, said the tour outlined estimates on increased purses and bonus pools and projected

the top performing player would soon be bringing in upward of \$40 million.

Rory McIlroy said the group first approached him in 2014. He didn't sound interested, talking about his traditional view of the tour, what it has meant to him and how much he would hate to lose a heritage built up over decades.

Don't expect to see McIlroy involved. Just don't get

the idea he's opposed to change.

"I love the PGA Tour," he said. "But these guys have exploited a couple of holes in the system, the way golf at the highest level is nowadays and how it's sort of transitioned from a competition tour to entertainment, right? It's on TV. It's people coming out to watch. It's definitely a different time than what it was before." □

U.S. women defeat Haiti 4-0 to open Olympic qualifying

HOUSTON (AP) — Christen Press scored the opening goal off a shoeless assist from Lynn Williams and the United States beat Haiti 4-0 on Tuesday in its opening match of the CONCACAF Women's Olympic Qualifying tournament.

The U.S., which won the Women's World Cup last summer, extended its unbeaten streak to 24 straight games dating back to a loss to France a year ago. Press' goal came in the second minute on a cross from Williams, who had lost her cleat in her run up the field. It was the 52nd international goal for Press.

Williams added a goal in the 67th minute on a header off a corner kick from Megan Rapinoe.

Lindsey Horan came off the bench and scored on her first touch in the 73rd minute and Carli Lloyd capped it off with a stoppage-time goal.

It was the first competitive match for U.S. coach Vlatko Andonovski, who took over when Jill Ellis stepped down last year.

Lloyd made her 15th start in Olympic qualifying, passing Abby Wambach for most in team history. Rapinoe, the reigning Ballon d'Or winner and FIFA World Player of the Year, played off the bench in the second half.

An announced crowd of 4,363 attended the game, which was hit in the first half by a sudden downpour at BBVA Compass

Stadium. The United States looked rusty at the start and Haiti appeared to tie the game with a goal in the 18th minute, but it was called back.

Then top-ranked Americans simply wore down their opponents in the second half.

Eight teams are playing in the tournament, with the title match set for Feb. 9 in Carson, California.

The top two finishers will earn berths to the Tokyo Games this summer.

The United States and Haiti were in the same group with Costa Rica and Panama, who played in the early match Tuesday. Costa Rica won 6-1.

The U.S. has qualified for every Olympics since



United States defender Becky Sauerbrunn, left, heads the ball as defender Abby Dahlkemper (7) is pulled by Haiti forward Sherly Jeudy, right, as she goes for the ball during the first half of a women's Olympic qualifying soccer match Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2020, in Houston.

Associated Press

women's soccer was introduced in 1996.

The team has five consecutive titles in the qualifying tournament.

Six teams have already made the field for Tokyo:

Japan, Brazil, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Sweden and New Zealand.

Haiti advanced to the tournament by winning its qualifying group in the Caribbean region. □

Apple holiday season tops projections as iPhone bounces back

By **MICHAEL LIEDTKE**

AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) —

Apple is still reaping huge profits from the iPhone while mining more money-making opportunities from the growing popularity of its smartwatch, digital services and wireless earbuds. That combination produced a banner holiday season for a company whose fortunes appeared to be sliding just a year ago amid declining sales for the iPhone, its marquee product for the past decade. Apple's fiscal first-quarter results, released Tuesday, provided the latest proof that the fears hanging over the consumer electronics icon might have been unfounded.

Apple's profit and revenue for the October-December period topped analysts' projections, providing another boost to a stock that has more than doubled in less than 13 months.

The shares surged more than 1% to \$322.14 in extended trading after the numbers came out. That's up from \$142 in January 2019 after Apple warned that consumers weren't buying as many new iPhones as they once were, especially in China, the company's biggest market outside the U.S. and Europe. China is also where



A selection of iPhones are displayed in an Apple store Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2020, in suburban Boston. Apple reports financial earnings on Tuesday.

Apple makes most of its iPhones and several other products.

If the shares move similarly in Wednesday's regular trading session, they will flirt with a new all-time high for the stock and further cement Apple's position as the most valuable company in the U.S., with a market value of \$1.4 trillion.

A deadly viral outbreak in China, which has curtailed travel and threatens the world economy, looms as a potential concern for Apple. But investors for now are focusing on what looks

like an even more prosperous road ahead for a company that turned a \$55 billion profit in its past fiscal year.

In a conference call Tuesday, CEO Tim Cook said the coronavirus outbreak has already caused some of Apple's suppliers in China to delay reopening their factories closed for the Lunar New Year holiday from the end of this month until Feb. 10. And some stores in China selling Apple products already have temporarily closed or reduced their operating hours be-

cause fewer customers are shopping as virus worries escalate.

"The situation is emerging and we're still gathering lots of data points and monitoring it very closely," Cook said.

Apple got off to a fast start for fiscal 2020, with a first-quarter profit of \$22.2 billion, or \$4.99 per share, on revenue of \$91.8 billion. Analysts polled by FactSet had predicted earnings of \$4.54 per share on revenue of \$88.5 billion.

As usual, the iPhone remained Apple's marquee

attraction. Boosted by the release of the iPhone 11 heading into the holiday season, the product generated sales of \$56 billion, an 8% increase from the previous year's disappointing showing.

Besides rolling out high-end phones with more cameras and a starting price of \$1,000, Apple sold a more basic model starting at \$700 — a \$50 drop from a comparable version released in 2018.

The services division is feeding into all iPhones, iPads, Macs and other Apple products already being used, which the company said Tuesday now totals 1.5 billion devices, up by 100 million from the previous year.

"We see this as a powerful testament to the satisfaction, engagement and loyalty of our customers — and a great driver of our growth across the board," Cook said.

The Apple TV Plus video streaming service, which Apple launched amid great fanfare in October, is supposed to help that cause, but it may not be a huge contributor this year. That's because Apple is initially selling it for just \$5 per month to help drum up interest. That's less than half the price of Netflix's most popular plan. □

Associated Press



In this Monday, July 29, 2019 photo an AT&T logo sits above an entrance to a building, in Boston.

By **TALI ARBEL**

AP Technology Writer

As entertainment companies roll out new streaming services, they're stocking them with the goodies from their own content archives, hoping that the loss

of income today will mean more money rolling in from subscribers in the future. In its fourth quarter, AT&T said that bet cost it \$1.2 billion in revenue. AT&T isn't alone in doing this. Comcast's NBCUniversal took back

Associated Press

Keeping 'Friends' for itself at HBO Max dings AT&T profit

"The Office" from Netflix for Peacock; Disney grabbed its movies for Disney Plus. Disney has said it lost about \$150 million in licensing revenue in its 2019 fiscal year from terminating deals with Netflix and other services.

AT&T's WarnerMedia is launching HBO Max in May and decided to keep "Friends" and "Big Bang Theory" for itself to bolster the service as its traditional TV customers melt away.

The company said during its earnings call Wednesday that WarnerMedia lost \$1.2 billion in revenue and \$500 million in a key profit measure because it kept

"Friends," "Big Bang Theory" and "other popular shows" for itself instead of licensing them to other streaming companies. WarnerMedia's revenue fell 3.3% to \$8.92 billion in the fourth quarter, and the profit measure dropped 7% to \$2.6 billion. "Obviously, this has an upfront cost for us, but we see this as an investment that makes HBO Max even stronger and will pay off over the long term," said AT&T CFO John Stephens on the earnings call.

The company has said it expects to spend \$19.5 billion through 2025 for HBO Max in the U.S., and it hopes the

service is profitable starting in 2025. HBO Max is important to AT&T as an increasing number of people cut the cable cord. AT&T, one of the country's largest video providers, has been hemorrhaging video customers. In the fourth quarter, AT&T lost 945,000 DirecTV and cable customers. Its older streaming service, AT&T TV Now, which streams traditional channels online in a bundle, lost 219,000 customers. For the year, AT&T lost 4.1 million video customers, ending at 20.3 million. It says it hopes 2019 was the peak for video subscriber losses. □

Buyers move to used vehicles as new autos hit record prices

By TOM KRISHER

AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — The average sale price of a new vehicle hit a record of just over \$39,000 late last year, a figure that chased many buyers out of the market and into used vehicles, which could set a sales record.

The shift to used, aided by millions of late-model vehicles coming off two- and three-year leases, is good for consumers who can get well-equipped cars, trucks and SUVs for far less than new ones. But it could be bad for automakers, with many industry analysts expecting new-vehicle sales to fall in 2020.

Consumers bought an estimated 40.4 million used vehicles last year, likely passing the old record of 40.2 million set in 2018, according to figures from the Edmunds.com auto pricing site. Edmunds, which provides content to The Associated Press, won't call it a record until final numbers arrive sometime in mid-February.

At the same time, new-vehicle sales dropped 1.3% to just over 17 million last year, and some industry analysts are predicting they'll fall into the mid-16 millions this year.

"This affordability issue is sort of scaring consumers away" from new vehicles, said Charlie Chesbrough, senior economist at Cox Automotive, which includes Kelley Blue Book. "You have this sort of competition out there of used vehicles that is offering an alternative to people who are looking for value."

Chesbrough expects new-vehicle sales to fall to 16.6 million this year, while Standard & Poors analyst Nishit Madhani predicts 16.4 million "amid a wave of used autos hitting the market and high sticker prices on new cars." S&P sees a further decline to 16.3 million for the following two years. If a buyer with good credit bought an average new vehicle for \$39,000 and put \$2,000 down, they would borrow \$37,000. That sum, at about 6% interest for



In this June 26, 2018, file photograph, a used 2017 Chevrolet Cruze sits in a row of other used, late-model sedans at a dealership in Centennial, Colo.

six years, would bring a monthly payment of just over \$600.

Since many lenders limit auto buyers to a payment of 15% of their income, the lowest-income buyer who could afford the average price would have to make over \$48,000 per year, said Matt Dundas, finance director for Carvana, an online used-vehicle sales company.

"That's approaching the U.S. median household income of just over \$60,000, and even then, you're still right up against lender limits," Dundas said. "Ideally the average person wouldn't be right up against the line," he said.

The lower prices make late-model used vehicles more attractive. Last year, Edmunds estimated the average used vehicle

cost \$20,533. A 3-year-old one cost an average of \$22,571. Borrowing \$20,000 for six years would cost an average buyer about a \$340 monthly payment.

Price isn't the only reason buying used is becoming more attractive. Automakers, dealers and sites like Carvana offer used vehicles with warranties and maintenance records, sometimes calling them "certified pre-owned."

"I think we're making it not as scary to buy a used car," Dundas said. "It's in great shape, it's clean and I'm dealing with a legitimate company," he said.

A record 2.8 million certified pre-owned vehicles were sold last year, according to Cox.

Aundrya Richardson, an emergency dispatcher in the Atlanta area, could

have afforded a new car but knew she shouldn't spend more than \$30,000 while trying to recover from financial problems. She decided in early January to buy a silver 2016 Toyota Corolla with 25,000 miles on it from Carvana for about \$15,000.

"I'm going to look for something that's lower but still a reliable vehicle," she said. "I wasn't really in a position to be super-picky. Maybe I'll get what I want next time." As demand falls, the industry could be forced to increase incentives such as cash rebates and low-interest financing, and ultimately that could bring new vehicle prices down. The average new vehicle sales price, including tax-

es, fees and automaker incentives, hit a record of \$39,028 last November, according to Cox. But as demand from individual buyers ebbed in December, dealer discounts grew to 7% of the sticker price, the highest level since the financial crisis in July of 2009. That drove the average price down slightly to \$38,948, according to Cox. Richard Bazy, owner of three Pittsburgh-area Ford dealerships, said automakers like Ford are going to have to keep up low interest loans and cash offers to keep new vehicle sales strong.

Still, there are forces working against lower new-vehicle prices. People are still buying SUVs and trucks, which accounted for 69% of U.S. sales last year. Trucks and SUVs generally are more expensive than cars, so that drives up the average sale price.

Also, people still want the latest safety and infotainment technology, says Chesbrough, and they are willing to spend to get it. Automakers are differentiating their new vehicles from even 2-year-old ones by adding more driver assist and safety features as well as bigger navigation screens and other technology, he said.

"All of that is going to force these vehicle prices to continue to creep up," Chesbrough said. □

Associated Press

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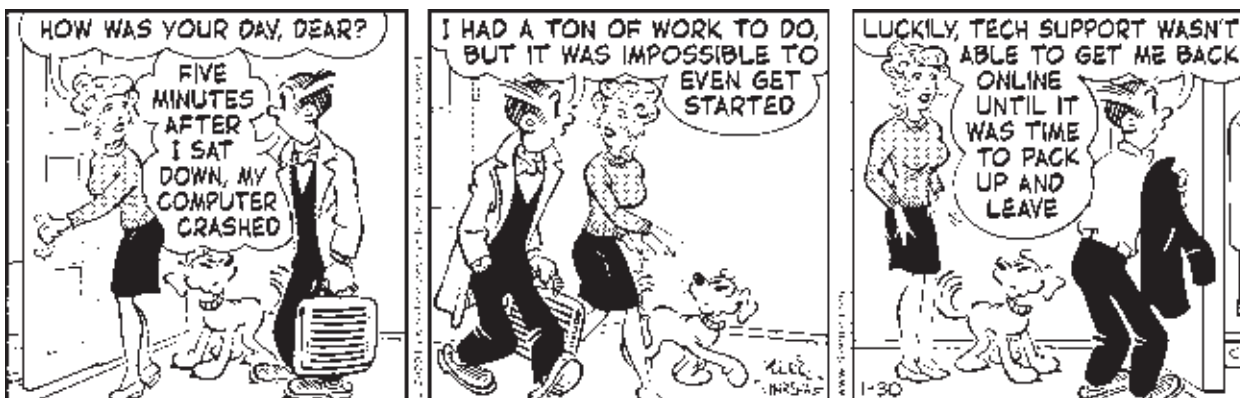
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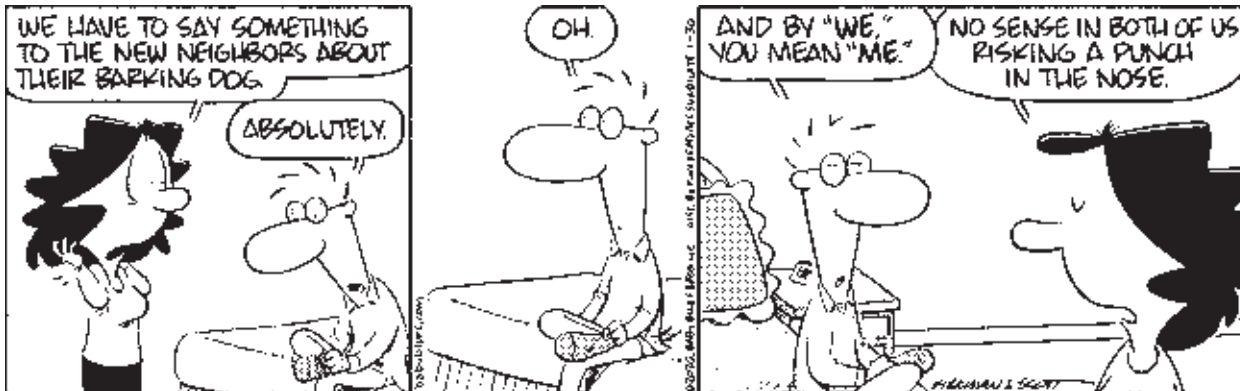
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Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

9	5		1					
		2	3					9
							2	4
4			7	3			1	6
	3			8				
3	7					5	3	
8				9		2	8	

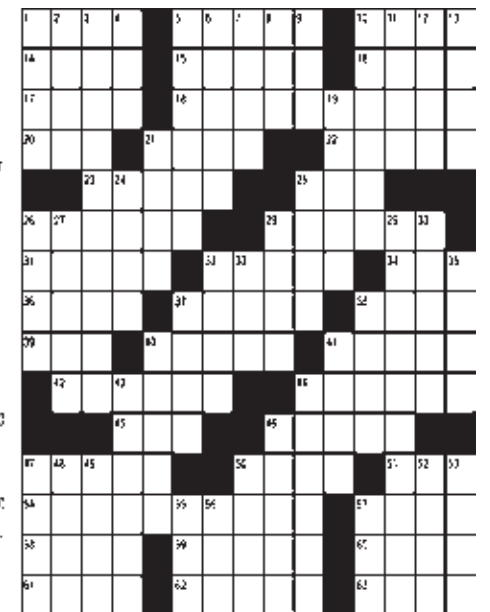
Difficulty Level ★★★

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

2	7	4	6	9	3	5	8	1
1	6	8	5	4	7	9	3	2
5	3	9	2	1	8	4	7	6
7	8	5	1	6	9	2	4	3
3	2	6	8	5	4	7	1	9
9	4	1	3	7	2	6	5	8
6	5	7	9	8	1	3	2	4
4	1	3	7	2	6	8	9	5
8	9	2	4	3	5	1	6	7

- ACROSS**
- Smooth
 - Slide over on the bench
 - Worry
 - along, move
 - sowly
 - Item in a purse or pocket
 - Push
 - Breaky
 - Heart, Billy Ray Cyrus hit
 - Reinforce
 - Peave
 - Puzzles
 - Malcolm
 - Middle
 - Refueling ship
 - Joan of Arc
 - Bergman film
 - Car's alternative
 - Snoozes
 - at bed to shoot
 - A rose by any other name
 - amok went wild
 - Lupinus
 - namesakes
 - Access Field
 - Song sung alone
 - up, ease
 - Access Bo
 - Poo toys
 - Whispered confidence
 - Pastor's territory
 - Tie a yellow ribbon round the ole
 - Permissible
 - Thin piece of leather
 - Humongous
 - Toward a ship's stern
 - Introducing
 - Su "x" for oolest or predict
 - Verna's nation
 - abhor
 - Or a
 - overriding
 - Highly ill
 - Yosuzo
 - tropical bed tents
 - Performed
 - Enlarge a hole



Created by Jacqueline E. Matthews

1/30/20

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

SOPH	BRAT	ALSO
EARED	RUSH	VAIN
WHOSE	INAUDIBLE	
SUM	BEA	ROASTS
URBAN	SIT	
ECLAIR	IDOLERS	
DDGIE	DELAY	EAT
GLAD	COYLY	BLUE
YET	SOLES	BOUND
SELECT	FRACAS	
OAK	FOAST	
IMPALA	ARC	ALL
TOADSTOOL	ERNIE	
CLUE	ONCE	SOCKS
HELD	OATS	BEEES

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Studio wk 7 \$1,5 K
sleep 4 date ;02/15 to 02/22/
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2 BR Ocean Side \$ 18 K
2 BR Ocean Front \$ 26 K
3 BR Ocean View \$ 26 K

Aruba Divi Phoenix
1 BR WK 2
building 8 Ground floor
32 weeks remain \$17 K
1 BR WK 8 \$15 K
building 6 on the 4th floor
27 weeks remain
Aruba Divi Phoenix
1 BR PH WK 8/9 \$20 K both
14th floor 32/22 weeks remain
1 BR WK 11
building 7 on the 3th floor
33 weeks remain \$15 K
Divi Links Golf
1 BR wk 1/2/3
Birdie 2 on the 3rd floor
25 weeks remain on each
All 3 weeks together 30 K each
Divi Links Golf
Studio WK 2 \$7.5 K
eagle 3 with 32 weeks remain
1 BR WK 3 \$8.5 K
eagle 3 with 23 weeks remain
Studio wk 5 ,7 and 8 \$8 K each
Birdie 4 with 28/27/29 weeks
remain

Divi Links Golf
2 BR WK 3 \$ 20 K
Eagle 8 with 25 weeks remain
2 BR wk 3 Lock out \$20 K
Birdie 9 26 weeks remain

Divi Links Golf \$8 K
1 Br Wk 4 Birdie 1
19 weeks remain
1 BR WK 6 Birdie 1 \$8 K

Dutch Village
1 BR wk 7/8 \$9 K each
15 weeks remain each
2 BR wk 7 \$18 K each
25 weeks remain

Studio WK 1 \$7.5 K
Ground Floor 33 weeks remain
Divi Village
1 BR WK 1 \$8.5 K
Studio wk 1 \$7.5 K
building D& F 25 weeks remain
each
Eagle Resort
1 BR wk 2
1 BR wk 3 and 4 same room
\$ 7000 each

212300

Divi Links Golf
Studio wk 1 \$7.5 K
building 4 with 28 weeks remain
Paradise Beach Villas
1 BR WK 1 & 2 \$20 K both
weeks
2sd floor poo/ocean view
Divi Links Golf
1 BR wk 8 & 9 \$9.5 K each
eagle 9 with 27/19 weeks
remain

Renaissance Suites
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4 rd floor overlook
Harbor Ocean View
1 BR WK # 11 \$9 K
3rd floor pool/ocean

Eagle Resorts
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1 BR WK 5,6,7,8
Ground floor \$8 K each
1 BR WK 7/8/9 \$8 K each
Caribbean Palm Village
1 BR WK 2 6 K
1 BR /2 BR wk 3 \$ 7 K
1 BR WK 3/4 \$6 K each
2 BR WK 5/6 \$7 K each

Dutch Village
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16 weeks remain
1 BR Wk 8 \$8K
12 weeks remain
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Astronaut craves salsa and surf after record 11 months aloft

By **MARCIA DUNN**

AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.

(AP) — After nearly 11 months in orbit, the astronaut holding the record for the longest spaceflight by a woman can't wait to dig into some salsa and chips, and swim and surf in the Gulf of Mexico.

NASA astronaut Christina Koch told The Associated Press on Tuesday — her 319th consecutive day in space — that taking part in the first all-female spacewalk was the highlight of her mission. She's been living on the International Space Station since March and returns to Earth on Feb. 6, landing in Kazakhstan with two colleagues aboard a Russian capsule. Koch said she and fellow NASA astronaut Jessica Meir appreciated that the Oct. 18 spacewalk "could serve as an inspiration for future space explorers."

"We both drew a lot of inspiration from seeing people that were reflections of ourselves as we were growing up and developing our dreams to become astronauts," Koch said from the space station. "So to recognize that maybe we could pay that forward and serve the same for those that are up and coming was just such a highlight."

Koch's astronaut class of 2013 was split equally between women and men, but NASA's astronaut corps as a whole is male dominated. Right now, four men and two women are living at the space station.

"Diversity is important, and I think it is something worth fighting for," said Koch, an electrical engineer who also has a physics degree. Koch's 328-day mission will be the second-longest by an American, trailing Scott



In this Thursday, March 14, 2019 file photo, U.S. astronaut Christina Koch, member of the main crew of the expedition to the International Space Station (ISS), speaks with her relatives through a safety glass prior the launch of Soyuz MS-12 space ship at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan.

Kelly's flight by 12 days. She's already set a record for the longest single spaceflight by a woman.

She took time out for a pair of news interviews Tuesday, the 34th anniversary of the space shuttle Challenger accident that claimed all seven lives on board.

She said she loves her work — she conducted six spacewalks and tended to science experiments — but she also misses her friends and family.

"If they could visit here, I would continue staying for a very long time," said Koch, a first-time space flier. "For their sake, I think that it's probably time to head home."

Her biggest surprise is how easily and quickly she adapted both mentally and physically to weightlessness.

"I don't even really realize that I'm floating any more," she said.

Why do chips and salsa top

her most-missed food list? Crunchy food like chips are banned on the space station because the crumbs could float away and clog equipment. "I haven't had chips in about 10 1/2 months," she explained, "but I have had a fresh apple" thanks to regular cargo deliveries.

Another thing she misses:

the ability to put things down and not have them float away.

She's gotten used to using Velcro and tape to make things stay put, "so I hope that when I go back to Earth, I don't accidentally drop things, especially when I'm handing them to people." Kelly, whose mission spanned 2015 and

2016, has given her advance notice of what to expect. "It's a great reminder to keep mentoring," Koch said. When her record is broken, "I hope to mentor that person just as I've been mentored."

Koch said it was crucial staying connected to loved ones through phone calls and video conferences. She watched as her nieces and nephews opened their Christmas presents. But it's also special celebrating holidays in space, she noted, which "kind of takes any sting off of missing your family."

Koch grew up in Jacksonville, North Carolina, and now lives near the Gulf of Mexico in Galveston, Texas, with her husband, Bob. She said she can't wait for their next wedding anniversary, Christmas at home and his birthday.

Her 41st birthday is Wednesday. How does she plan to celebrate?

Playing Scrabble with her U.S., Italian and Russian crew mates, as challenging as that might be in weightlessness. She packed a travel version of the game and has been too busy to enjoy it. □

Associated Press

NASA shutting down space telescope, infrared eyes to cosmos

By **MARCIA DUNN**

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.

(AP) — NASA is pulling the plug on one of its great observatories — the Spitzer Space Telescope — after 16 years of scanning the universe with infrared eyes. The end comes Thursday when ground controllers put the aging spacecraft into permanent hibernation.

For years, Spitzer peered through dusty clouds at untold stars and galaxies, uncovered a huge, nearly invisible ring around Saturn, and helped discover seven Earth-size planets around a nearby star.

Spitzer's last observation was expected Wednesday. Altogether, Spitzer observed 800,000 celestial targets and churned out more

than 36 million raw images as part of the \$1.4 billion mission.

An estimated 4,000 scientists around the world took part in the observations and published nearly 9,000 studies, according to NASA.

"You have to be proud ... when you look back and say, 'Look at the team that's operating Spitzer, look at the team that's contributing to having all of this great science,'" said project manager Joseph Hunt.

Designed to last just 2.5 years to five years, the telescope got increasingly difficult to operate as it drifted farther behind Earth, NASA said. It currently trails Earth by 165 million miles (265 million kilometers), while orbit-

ing the sun. Spitzer will continue to fall even farther behind Earth, posing no threat to another spacecraft or anything else, officials said. "Although it would be great to be able to operate all of our telescopes forever, this is not possible," NASA's astrophysics director Paul Hertz said in an email.

NASA originally planned to decommission Spitzer a few years ago, but put off its demise as the James Webb Space Telescope, a vastly more elaborate infrared observatory, kept getting delayed.

Webb's launch is now off until at least early next year. This week, the Government Accountability Office warned of further delays because of technical challenges. □

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Meghan Trainor leaves pain behind and offers fresh new music

By MARK KENNEDY

AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Four years ago, Meghan Trainor won the Grammy Award for best new artist. On the first anniversary of that very win she was literally speechless — under the knife for vocal surgery.

It was her second time in the operating room for vocal cord work and it led to weeks of silence, anxiety and depression. The "All About That Bass" singer worried she'd never be able to perform again.

"I went to a dark place. And I climbed out of it and I conquered it and I was really proud of myself," she tells The Associated Press. "My therapist was like, 'You should treat yourself after what you went through.'"

So that's why Trainor's third album is called "Treat Myself," a 15-track collection that sees the singer-songwriter stretch past her signature doo-wop pop sound to embrace hip-hop and electronic elements.

There's the Sia-like "Wave," the slinky club banger "Nice To Meet Ya" with Nicki Minaj and soaring ballads like "After You" alongside familiar retro and '60s-inspired tunes like "No Excuses" and "Evil Twin."

"I've always been writing songs in many genres," she says. Her dad introduced her to gospel, soul and funk, like Ray Charles and Stevie Wonder. Mom leaned toward the pop of Madonna and ABBA. A Trinidadian uncle turned her on to soca music. She herself grew up with Britney Spears and the Backstreet Boys.

"When I try to write, I try to give all my influences in that. I always want to make up a pretend genre — six different genres in one song," she says.

Tommy Bruce, her manager, has watched as Trainor over the past three years has explored whatever musical inspiration strikes, not caring about labels or charts.

"She is such a wildly talented artist, from musicianship to songwriting to produc-

ing, and she has this ability to move between genre and style with such ease," he says. Listen very carefully to Trainor's new album and you'll discover it's very much a family affair. Her brothers — Justin and Ryan — have writing credits and sing background. Her parents — Gary and Kelli — supply background vocals and claps. Even her husband, actor Daryl Sabara, sings on nine tracks.

For this album, Trainor sought out new producers, which resulted in stretching her sound. She had success with Ricky Reed on the last album, "Thank You," but says she felt too safe doing it again.

"I'm a creature of habit. When I found someone who understood how I worked, I thought, 'This is great. Let's do this forever.' So for this album, I really wanted to get out there and meet as many songwriters and producers as I could." This time, some of the producers include Mike Sabath, Eddie Benjamin, King Henry, Ojivolta, Zach Skelton, Sigala, Tyler Johnson and Andrew Wells, purposely trying to lift up emerging talent. She also shared the microphone with Minaj, Nicole Scherzinger, AJ Mitchell, Lennon Stella, Sasha Sloan and Sabath.

"We felt like finally we have an album full of hit singles and I'm so confident in every song. We kept writing and saying, 'May the best song win,'" she says. "Now we have this album that we're finally read to show the world."

Many of the songs have Trainor's trademark messages of empowerment. "Love yourself," she sings in "Babygirl." On "Workin' On It," she admits to fighting thoughts of self-loathing: "I should give myself way more love." And on "No Excuses," she demands respect: "I don't disrespect you, don't you disrespect me."

"It's really hard to write a self-love, empowering anthem without being

cheesy," she says. "That's something that the world loves and needs. I know I need it, and it's something I want to hear on the radio. So those are my favorite songs to write because I'm working on it every single day — my confidence and my self love. I know somebody else needs it, too."

The album also has a few inside jokes. It gives her a kick that the title 'Treat Myself' is her initials backward. And she has a call-back to her first big hit in "Genetics" when she sings "How you get dat bass?"

Trainor, who plans to tour with Maroon 5 this year, also has a side hustle as a musical judge. She spent



This Jan. 21, 2020 photo shows singer-songwriter Meghan Trainor posing for a portrait in Burbank, Calif. to promote her new album "Treat Myself."

Associated Press

two seasons on "The Four" and recently replaced Jennifer Hudson in the spinning chair at "The Voice UK." For someone who's been writing songs since she was 7, is it easy for an artist to shoot down another artist?

"It is weird, I'll tell you that.

The majority of the singers on 'The Voice' are way better singers than I am," she says. "It was really difficult to be like, 'Who's the best of the best?' and knowing we had 40 more people to listen to. It was a very difficult mission to accomplish." □



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In this Monday, Jan. 13, 2020 photo, Rev. David Kennedy stands outside the Echo Theater holding a photo of his great uncle's lynching, in Laurens, S.C. Kennedy has fought for civil rights in South Carolina for decades.

Associated Press

Pastor's fight against KKK becomes movie that may aid battle

By JEFFREY COLLINS

Associated Press

LAURENS, S.C. (AP) — Not many years ago in a small, rural South Carolina town stood The Redneck Shop — a racist emporium and Ku Klux Klan museum housed in an old theater, where white supremacist neo-Nazis gave heil-Hitler salutes and flaunted swastikas and Rebel flags.

That building, once the property of the Klan, now belongs to a black preacher and committed foe of racism who fought the group for more than 20 years. The Rev. David Kennedy plans to transform it into a shrine of reconciliation. How Kennedy, whose great-great-uncle was lynched in the community, got ownership of the old Echo Theater building from an ex-Klansman — a man who once contemplated murdering Kennedy — is the subject of a movie that could end up raising funds for that transformation.

"It symbolizes right now in the shape it's in — hatred," Kennedy said. "But we hope we can turn it into a building of love."

A decade ago, the white supremacist store in Laurens was a place where one of the few shirts sold without an overt racial slur said, "If I had known this was going to happen I would have picked my own cotton." The World Famous Ku Klux Klan Museum with its racist meeting place was in the back.

The KKK had put the title in the name of a trusted member, Michael Burden. Burden says other Klan members once suggested that he kill Kennedy, and he considered it. Kennedy didn't know that when he saw Burden, hungry, poor and full of hate, and took him to a buffet to fill his stomach, then to a hotel so his family wouldn't have to sleep on the street.

Burden's girlfriend at the time kept urging him to leave the Klan and in 1997, he did. He also bestowed ownership of the old theater building upon Ken-

dy for \$1,000. But there was a twist. Under the agreement, John Howard, who owned The Redneck Shop, would be allowed to stay and run his store as long as he lived. Howard abandoned the store years ago, ignoring maintenance. Duct work and piping were ripped from the walls. He died in 2017, giving Kennedy complete control over the building.

Kennedy estimates it needs at least \$500,000 in repairs that must be done carefully because of the theater's age and historic location. That seems impossible for the minister whose New Beginning Missionary Baptist Church congregation meets in a converted gun store several miles west of Laurens.

But a movie may provide a Hollywood ending.

The story of the unlikely friendship between Kennedy and Burden has been made into a film called "Burden," scheduled for national release Feb. 28. Starring actor Forest Whitaker as Kennedy, it was shown at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival.

101 Studios, which distributed it, has promised Kennedy it'll help repair and reopen the theater. They have created a website at <https://www.rehabhate.com/> to accept donations and tell more people about the project.

"The South cannot rid itself of its past. But we could rid ourselves of the Redneck Shop," Kennedy said.

The studio is getting companies to donate materials and time and is selling commemorative bricks that can be placed at the theater.

The movie's director, Andrew Heckler, first entered The Redneck Shop in the late 1990s after reading a short article about Kennedy's fight. He knew it had to be a movie and finished the screenplay in 2001, finally getting the green light from 101 Studios to make the film a few years ago.

"I knew this story would mean something to peo-

ple. Three people in the middle of nowhere South Carolina did something that would be meaningful to all people," Heckler said. "There is a pathway for fighting hate. It's not easy. It's love, faith and not giving up." Kennedy knows about not giving up. He protested when a South Carolina county refused to observe the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, and he helped lobby to remove the Confederate flag from the Statehouse dome. In his church office, he keeps a poster-size photo of a lynched black man swinging at the end of a rope. It is his great uncle, killed more than 100 years ago by a white mob in Laurens County.

Kennedy also has a photo of white people about 15 years ago in the back of the theater, wearing uniforms with a Nazi swastika and raising their arms and hands in a white power salute. "Racism is a strange kind of organism. It is systemic. And it probably will not go away in our lifetimes," Kennedy said.

Burden and Kennedy remain friends, though not as close as they once were. Burden got married, turned his life around and now drives a truck across the country.

"When I changed my lifestyle I buried that guy," Burden said of his racist past. Burden cautiously shares his story with those he thinks need to know that change is possible. The movie named after him is a way to do that on a larger scale. "I'm willing to go through this again," Burden said. "Am I happy about it? Some days yes, some days no."

Kennedy recently gave a tour of the theater to a few visiting reporters. Through the soft winter afternoon sunlight, faded two-story paintings of Nazi and U.S. flags can still be seen on a wall. A Confederate flag remains on the theater marquee.

The images are deteriorating, but they linger. □

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PH MON-THU 6:30 | 8:40
FRI 6:30 | 8:40 | 10:50
SAT 2:10 | 4:20 | 6:30 | 8:40 | 10:50
SUN 2:10 | 4:20 | 6:30 | 8:40

PBP MON-THU 5:25 | 7:30 | 9:35
FRI 5:25 | 7:30 | 9:35 | 11:40
SAT 1:15 | 3:20 | 5:25 | 7:30 | 9:35 | 11:40
SUN 1:15 | 3:20 | 5:25 | 7:30 | 9:35

VARUN DHAWAN | SHRADDHA KAPOOR

STREET DANCER 3

PBP MON-FRI 5:45 | 8:50
SAT-SUN 2:40 | 5:45 | 8:50

WILL SMITH | MARTIN LAWRENCE

BAD BOYS FOR LIFE

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

PH MON-THU 7:40
FRI 7:40 | 10:20
SAT 2:10 | 4:55 | 7:40 | 10:20
SUN 2:10 | 4:55 | 7:40

PBP MON-FRI 5:50 | 8:35
SAT-SUN 3:05 | 5:50 | 8:35

CXC MON-THU 5:10 | 7:30
FRI 5:10 | 7:30 | 10:00
SAT 2:50 | 5:10 | 7:30 | 10:00
SUN 2:50 | 5:10 | 7:30

PBP MON-FRI 4:00 | 6:40 | 9:20
SAT-SUN 1:20 | 4:00 | 6:40 | 9:20

MACKENZIE DAVIS | FINN WOLFHARD

THE TURNING

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES PG-13

PH MON-THU 6:15 | 8:30
FRI 6:15 | 8:30 | 10:15
SAT 1:50 | 4:00 | 6:15 | 8:30 | 10:15
SUN 1:50 | 4:00 | 6:15 | 8:30

PBP MON-THU 5:00 | 7:15 | 9:30
FRI 5:00 | 7:15 | 9:30 | 11:40
SAT 2:45 | 5:00 | 7:15 | 9:30 | 11:40
SUN 2:45 | 5:00 | 7:15 | 9:30

ROBERT DOWNEY JR. | ANTONIO BANDERAS

DOLITTLE

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES PG

PH MON-THU 5:50 | 8:15
FRI 5:50 | 8:15 | 10:40
SAT 3:25 | 5:50 | 8:15 | 10:40
SUN 3:25 | 5:50 | 8:15

PBP MON-THU 4:20 | 6:40 | 9:00
FRI 4:20 | 6:40 | 9:00 | 11:00
SAT 2:00 | 4:20 | 6:40 | 9:00 | 11:20
SUN 2:00 | 4:20 | 6:40 | 9:00

DEAN-CHARLES CHAPMAN | GEORGE MACKAY

1917

10 ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATIONS

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES R

PBP MON-SUN 6:25 | 9:00

WILL SMITH | TOM HOLLAND

SPIES IN DISGUISE

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES PG

PBP MON-FRI 4:05
SAT-SUN 1:45 | 4:05

DWAYNE JOHNSON | JACK BLACK

JUMANJI THE NEXT LEVEL

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES PG-13

PBP MON-THU 3:50 | 6:30 | 9:10
FRI 3:50 | 6:30 | 9:10 | 11:45
SAT 1:10 | 3:50 | 6:30 | 9:10 | 11:45
SUN 1:10 | 3:50 | 6:30 | 9:10

MICHAEL B. JORDAN | JAMIE FOXX

JUST MERCY

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES PG-13

PH MON-THU 7:50
FRI 7:50 | 10:50
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In this Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2020 photo, Singer Gloria Estefan moderates a presentation with Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor in Miami.

Associated Press

Justice Sotomayor teases new picture book on civics, heroes

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON
Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor wants young children to think of citizenship in a different way.

The justice sat down with Grammy Award winning singer Gloria Estefan in Miami and told a crowd of hundreds about the idea for her next children's book, which will be about civic participation.

Sotomayor said her preferred title would be "How To Be a Hero," and the book will portray acts of civic participation as heroic.

"People think of citizenship as a formal title of belonging to a country," she said. "Citizenship with a small 'c' is what we are in every community that we choose to live in: whether it's your building, your block, the community of the church, the community of your school." Appointed to the court by President Barack Obama in 2009, Sotomayor said she wants to use her platform as a justice to inspire children through books, this time by helping "kids understand what it takes to change the world."

"Everyone of us has a responsibility to make that community better. And that's what makes heroes—it's those people who see something wrong in their community and say 'I will work to change that,'" she said. Sotomayor has kept busy writing content for

kids, and she notes that her works come out simultaneously in Spanish because she grew up in New York City to Puerto Rican parents speaking the language but not finding enough literature in her mother tongue.

After her 2013 memoir, "My Beloved World," came out, she wrote an abridged version for middle school readers. Then she wrote an autobiographical picture book, "Turning Pages," in 2018 and her most recent picture book, "Just Ask!," published last year, about children with "life challenges" such as attention deficit disorder, autism, blindness and diabetes. Sotomayor was diagnosed with diabetes at age 7.

Sotomayor told the crowd Tuesday not to scold children when they stare at people with deformities.

"Teach them not to have pity but to have curiosity," she said.

Sotomayor sat for only a few minutes with Estefan, and then both women walked along the rows of the Temple Judea synagogue in the Coral Gables suburb. She shook hands with many but only took written questions—and hugs—from children.

The Cuban-born singer read aloud a question from a 5-year-old girl before asking her to approach Sotomayor. "How can I stop being shy?" Estefan read.

Sotomayor looked at the girl and smiled. "You just started," she said. □



This combination photo shows H.E.R. performing at the 2019 Essence Festival in New Orleans on July 6, 2019, left, and Missy Elliott performing at the 2019 Essence Festival on July 5, 2019. The pair will appear in a new Pepsi commercial that will debut for the Super Bowl.

Associated Press

Rapper Missy Elliott, H.E.R. team up for Pepsi Super Bowl ad

By KELLI KENNEDY

Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP)

— Almost three years ago, Missy Elliott sent a tweet to a then under-the-radar artist whose music she admired and told her that "she was going to blow up." Fast forward to 2020 and H.E.R. has been nominated for a total of 10 career Grammys, won two and is now starring with the rap legend in a new Pepsi commercial that will debut for the Super Bowl.

"When Pepsi reached out and said we want to have you on the Super Bowl commercial and the other person would be H.E.R. I was like, 'Oh my God, this is major'" Elliott said.

Elliott first heard of the "Best Part" singer from a friend who had her debut album on repeat.

Elliott thought the record was "hot" and "immediately started Googling her," but couldn't find much information beyond her mixtape.

"It made me fall in love with her music," Elliott told The Associated Press in a recent phone interview. "I didn't get into what she looked like, what she said, what she had on, it was just the lyrics and the tracks and all that and I was like,

'This girl is really talented'."

Now the pair are collaborating on a cover of the Rolling Stones' classic "Paint It Black" for the commercial.

The animated ad for Pepsi Zero Sugar features H.E.R.'s sultry sound awash in red, surrounded by fluid dancers swishing long, red trains before it melds into a black stage punctuated by an upbeat rap from Elliott. The new track was co-produced by Elliott and longtime collaborator Timbaland with original lyrics from both artists and guitar and vocals from H.E.R.

"It's scary when you're having to recreate something that is so iconic and make sure that you do it justice," said Elliott, who performed at the Super Bowl with Katy Perry in 2015.

The two are the latest to join Pepsi's ad lineup, joining the ranks of Ray Charles, Michael Jackson, Tina Turner and Britney Spears.

They bonded in the studio, where H.E.R. said they got to know each other on a more personal level.

"She was telling me tour stories ... I felt like I had the inside scoop. It was really cool to peek into her world," said H.E.R. "She's just dope musically...there's nobody like Missy."

She added she's always admired Elliott's individuality and creativity as a producer.

"Missy's vibe is what I really loved and looked up to growing up, just how different she dared to be."

So can fans expect to see the artists make an appearance in Miami for the big game?

H.E.R. is still recovering from her whirlwind Grammy weekend: She performed on the telecast and was nominated for five Grammys, including record, song and album of the year. And Elliott is, um well, a little afraid to come to Miami even though she owns two houses here.

"Last time I was there I went to open the door and a gecko lizard jumped on my shoulder and I swore I'd never come back. I was so scared ... those little gecko lizards are everywhere." □



RIGHT AT HOME: Reclaimed wood's past adds character to decor

By **KIM COOK** Associated Press

In their new book, "Reclaimed Wood: A Field Guide" (Abrams, 2019), woodworkers Alan Solomon and Klaas Armster close with an imagined re-counting of one tree's story from sprout to salvage.

The tale begins in the 1500s, when longleaf pine covered a vast area from North Carolina down to the tip of Texas and the Florida Panhandle — "the largest forested lands in North America," the authors say. Over the next few hundred years, their pine tree grows to 120 feet. Naturally fire-resistant, it survives storms, woodpeckers, hunters and the Civil War, until it succumbs to loggers in the 1880s. The tree is then brought to a mill, shipped to New York, and taken by horse cart along cobblestone streets to lower Manhattan. For the next couple of hundred years, its wood frames commercial lofts that hold hat shops and daguerreotype salons. After demolition in the mid-2000s, the pine boards are salvaged by builders to clad the floors of the Park Avenue Armory and make gym bleachers in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

As the authors write, "the longleaf that had grown in the South and then went North, ultimately kept roots in both places."

The story describes what could be the life's journey of many trees whose long-lasting wood was a primary building material in the development of towns and cities.

These days, although many new buildings are made of concrete or brick, there's a resurgence in using reclaimed wood in everything from ceiling beams to feature walls, furniture, flooring or exterior cladding.

Architects and designers appreciate the narrative that salvaged wood brings to a project, and the physical charm of planed boards with the patina and markings of their life stories. Solomon and Armster run Sawkill Lumber in Brooklyn,



This photo shows Rhinebeck, N.Y. based Sawkille Co.'s salvaged tree trunks made into stump tables and seating. They can be bleached, stained or custom dyed. (Sawkille Co. via AP)

Associated Press

New York, supplying wood salvaged from barns, commercial and industrial sites, and homes to architects, contractors and woodworkers. Sometimes their hardwoods or softwoods are left in their natural state, but the team also "rehab" beams and boards by refinishing, sanding and giving them coats of protective stains, oils or waxes.

In one case, Solomon says, they acquired wood from dismantled Worcestershire sauce tanks at an old Lea

& Perrins plant in New Jersey.

"The wood is high-quality, old-growth Douglas fir, free of knots, with a strong scent of sauce after re-sawing," says Solomon, who used some of the wood to clad his own home.

The Hudson Company, which has a mill and showroom in Pine Plains, New York, and showrooms in Manhattan and Ridgefield, Connecticut, salvages timbers and boards from various cities' water

towers, industrial buildings and agrarian structures. It has also salvaged framing from mushroom farms; the woods — mostly hemlock and cypress — develop unique characteristics over the fungi's growth cycle.

Company president Jamie Hammel likes the idea that the wood, often used as paneling in residential and commercial projects, is salvaged from an ongoing agricultural process.

"So, in a sense it's a renewable resource, because

the farmers are continuously updating and replacing the boards from the growing beds. In addition, the caramel color wood tones, fine grain, and sculptural textures offer a unique aesthetic," he says.

Jonah Meyer, who owns Sawkille Company, a furniture design studio in Rhinebeck, New York, praises heart pine for its "wonderful stripes. Heart pines come from the beams of America's first factories, and of course, these were old growth forests that were being cut. Old growth also means slow growth; the rings of the trees are very tight. Nothing grows like that anymore."

Meyer crafts chairs, tables and other furniture, some of which he paints with woodland scenes or decorative motifs.

When nature sends something his way, he'll make the most of it.

"Occasionally we find a huge tree that has come down in a storm, so we cut it up for coffee tables and start drying the pieces. They're amazing to work with — some are almost 45 inches across," he says.

"Over time we get to know the tree, and it's a good feeling to have saved it from the firewood pile." □



This photo provided by Hudson Company in New York's Hudson Valley shows salvaged wood paneling at the Omi Center in Ghent, N.Y.

Associated Press.